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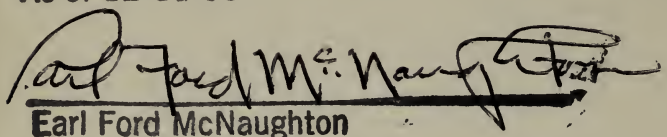

Earl Ford McNaughton

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JOHN CARIS

A CHILD *of the* SUN

"WHAT IS AN ARROW MORE OR LESS?"

SEE PAGE 102.

A
CHILD *of the* SUN

By

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS

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WAUPELLO, THE CHILD OF THE SUN.

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A CHILD OF THE SUN

CHAPTER I

THE ARCTIDES

The Arctides differed in many particulars from the other nations of Red Men. According to tribal tradition, they were descended from the sun, Hasihta being their first earthly father. While the migrations of all the other Indian tribes were westward, the journeys of the Arctides had been ever toward the east.

To reach the country which they now inhabited, the tribe had found it necessary to cross a great lake, or water, which was shallow, narrow, and full of rocky islands. But far worse than the voyage across the water were the terrible fields of snow and ice which they were compelled to encounter, and being little accustomed to even the slightest cold, the Arctides were unutterably wretched until they left the frozen region far behind them.

When the Children of the Sun first set foot upon the new shore, the earth all about the landing-place

showed itself strewn with quantities of reddish-yellow metal, Antee, the copper. Quickly they made for themselves spears and arrowheads, and the many useful utensils needed in their homes—cooking-pots, and spoons, and knives with points.

But ere long this metal disappeared, and in their travels the copper vessels were so often lost or forgotten that nothing remained of them. One piece in the Council Chamber was the only trace of copper to be found among their possessions.

Powerful and numerous as the tribe of Arctides once had been, it had slowly but surely diminished, until only a few scattered villages remained on the banks of the Long River.

To no earthly cause, however, was the destruction of this noble race attributed. In their battles with other tribes they had always been the conquerors, and in great learning they were without equal amongst the Indian nations.

When the men of the tribe went forth in the chase, they did not return empty-handed. To their bows and to their spears fell the choicest game, until "May the fortune of the Arctides attend you on the chase," became a maxim.

Very brave were they, fearing neither man nor multitudes in the defense of their liberty; very generous were they, too, for when once the fight was over they tendered every kindness to the conquered, bind-

ing up their wounds, bringing them water and food, so that none might suffer needlessly.

The men of the race of Arctides were tall, lithe, and muscular. The face was the fine face of the student; the slender nostrils quivering with every breath, the wide eyes gleaming with eagerness and wisdom, the forehead swelling grandly beneath the long, smooth, heavy black hair, the chin curved like the cleanly trimmed bow of their birch canoes. Proudly erect were their heads on their muscular throats, and when they smiled their teeth were sparkling white between the curving lip-lines.

The women were fine as the men were noble. They carried the unquenchable beauty of the tribe, and the warriors of other nations cast longing eyes on the maidens of the Arctides, so dark of eye, so soft of voice were they, so grandly erect they walked, girdled with virtue. Their laugh was the music of the thrush, rippling from their ruddy lips. Like crowns above their beautiful low brows, they bound their glorious dark hair, or let it fall like a robe over their shoulders.

With willing hands they wove the soft baskets for the new corn and sweet roots dug from the earth, or wrought ever so cunningly the necklaces and girdles of their tribe.

The Children of the Sun would have multiplied greatly had it not been for an evil thing that had

befallen them many thousand moons before they had arrived at their home by the Long River.

Once, when stung to furious wrath at the insolent disobedience of Hasihta, the Sun Man, Gitche Manito, the Great Spirit, had created the terrible Piasau, Bird of Evil. It was decreed that this horrible monster should feast only on the people of this tribe; and having once tasted human flesh and blood, nothing else appeased its voracious appetite.

The Piasau was a winged monster with horns like a roebuck, fiery red eyes, and a beard like the buffalo bull. The face was not unlike the face of a man, with the thick lips drawn back from horrible, sharp, white teeth. Its body was covered with scales as large as clam shells. Its claws were like the claws of the eagle many times multiplied, and its tail was so long that it passed entirely around the body, over the head and between the legs, ending like the tail of a fish.

Its huge wings were a shell-like green, and so large that their folding and unfolding produced sounds like the rushing of many winds.

As soon as Gitche Manito had sent the Piasau as a curse upon the Children of the Sun, he regretted that for the disobedience of one man the innocent for generations to follow would be compelled to suffer, and calling a council of the Arctides, the Great Spirit spoke, saying:

"I have sent you the Piasau, Bird of Evil, because

Hasihta displeased me. But you, who have done no wrong, should not be made to suffer eternally for his wrong-doing. Behold, I have created an arrow, the Arrow of the Sun. On a day there shall come to the men of Arctides a descendant of Hasihta. As a great prophet he shall come, and when he is amongst you he will relate why I have given you the arrow and will tell you how to use it. Guard the arrow with your lives, hold it forever sacred, for on it dependeth the final hope of the Arctides. Take it, O men of Arctides, and depart."

The Arrow of the Sun was sealed in a copper case, exquisitely decorated. The seal was that of the sun, and the case could never be opened save by a word which the Great Spirit withheld until the people were worthy to receive it.

Beneath a golden disk of the sun in the Council Chamber of the tribe, the beautiful arrow awaited the coming of the child of the line of Hasihta, who was to break the seal, fit the arrow to his bowstring, and go forth to slay the Piasau.

From the day on which the Piasau was first sent forth as a creature of destruction, he never ceased his persecution of the people of Arctides, and the tribe waited none too patiently for the fulfillment of the prophecy made so long ago.

High up amongst the cliffs where no man might go dwelt the Bird of Evil. Whenever it sallied forth,

spreading its awful wings like a pall over the village sky, men, women, and children sickened unto death, and the Piasau feasted.

Neither were the spirits of the departed warriors permitted to journey safely to the Happy Hunting Grounds, for, hovering on the border of the beautiful lake over which the souls were bound to voyage, the monster lay in wait to capture and bear them away to its foul nest in the cliff, devouring them at its leisure, to keep life in its own evil veins.

CHAPTER II

THE VILLAGE OF THE ARCTIDES

'Twas the season of the Strawberry Moon in the country of the Arctides.

Hip-high on the broad prairie stood the grasses, waving like an emerald sea. The rugged banks of the Long River were crowned with oak, beech, and maple trees, rich with summer foliage. Walnuts and hickories, their slender boughs bending beneath the weight of half-grown nuts, stood phalanx-like in the dark, cool forest.

Above the ravines, rank with fern and lichen, the blackberry bushes drooped with their burden of ripening fruit, whilst out on the undulating plains the luscious strawberries hid themselves from prying eyes in the fresh, sweet grasses.

The shores of the Long River were steep and rocky, but sloped easily and gently toward the open country of the north and the west.

The village of the Arctides was built about an open space on the hillside.

On an eminence overlooking the river, to the east, stood the principal tepee of the Arctides, the beautiful

Council Chamber, where the chieftains sat together and planned the conduct of the tribe.

The Council Chamber was a long, broad room, with vaulted ceiling, and almost perpendicular sides. The arched roof was formed of young hickory saplings, bent to the desired shape, and fastened with plaited thongs of deerskin. For this structure the Arctides used more than a hundred arches and made it the combined length of ten deerskins, so that the lodge was a most imposing edifice. Completely covering these arches were buffalo-skins laid together with such exactitude that neither the cold of winter nor the heat of summer might penetrate the hall.

The roof and sides of the Council Chamber were gorgeously decorated with figures and writings telling of the wonderful adventures that had befallen the Children of the Sun for untold generations. The floor was thickly strewn with the finest skins the Arctides had been able to obtain, making a carpet as soft as a summer cloud.

Depending from the arches, and suspended from hundreds of antlers of the moose and the deer fastened to the wall, were skins of all sorts. Great bunches of feathers and strings of wampum gave an air of brilliancy and richness to the interior.

The lodge was open at both ends for the purpose of lighting it, but so cleverly were the skins that hung at the entrance fitted, that it was possible to close the

lodge so completely that not a single ray of light entered.

In the interior of the Council Chamber, and at the extreme eastern end, upon an altar of stone, carved with a figure of Hasihta, stood the shield of the tribe, adorned with a glowing picture of the sun. Immediately in front of the shield, in its decorated casing, rested the Arrow of the Sun. All about the altar, arranged with the minutest attention to detail, were the ceremonial robes and head-dresses of the tribe, the pouches and powerful charms used by the medicine-men, the ceremonial drums and the musical instruments.

Immediately above the altar, in a skin splendidly trimmed with the highly polished teeth of wild animals and eagle-feathers, reposed the Peace Pipe; and in a receptacle especially fashioned for them by the medicine-men of the tribe were the bone Images of the Sun. These images had been, according to tradition, carved by the sun itself and dropped in the paths of the prophets. They were the most cherished belongings of the tribe, used in all their religious ceremonies.

At the extreme west end of the Council Chamber was the picture of the Piasau bird, depicted in all its grinning horror upon the skin of a buffalo. Before the picture of the monster gifts were placed as peace offerings, for the Children of the Sun stood in great fear of the bird, and hoped by this means to propitiate it

and avoid the disasters that were constantly befalling them.

Below the Council Chamber, and at a little distance to the right, was the lodge of Minno, the leading prophet of the tribe, a substantial tepee, built of buffalo-hides and bark. The sustaining pillars were of young hickory trees, and the wide and inviting entrance was hung with ropes of deer and bear skins. The sides of the tepee were painted with allegorical pictures representing the most important epochs in the history of the totem of the Beaver, of which Minno was the oldest living descendant.

The floor of Minno's hut, not unlike the floor of the Council Chamber, was also strewn with the skins of the otter, the fox, and the bear. About the sides of the lodge were hung the symbols of the prophet,—medicine-bags, thunder-clubs, bunches of sacred feathers, innumerable claws of birds, and teeth of the gray wolf and the bear. Beneath the roof, in a fanciful border, were hung the skins of snakes and the heads of hundreds of birds that had died in the forest.

Beyond the Council Chamber, on the extreme edge of the bluff, was the Minno watchtower. Here were kindled the signal-fires for communication between the tribes. Eloquent were the flames, and so carefully was the burning regulated that they made known with nicety any message to those at a great distance.

The tepees of the villagers were scattered about in

irregular patches, and were elegant or plain, as the owners pleased. The entrances to the tepees were never closed, except to shut out the storm or cold. The greatest freedom existed in the village, and the members of the tribe entered or left their neighbors' dwellings as freely as their own.

In the center of the village was a large clearing, in which went forward all the games and jousts of the tribe. Here the feasts were celebrated, and here the children ran races, played at ball, wrestled, or shot their arrows at targets. Around to the east, in a sweeping curve, wound the Long River.

CHAPTER III

MINNO, THE PROPHET

Minno, the Prophet, was called by his tribe the Father of the Arctides. He was descended from Hasihta, the Sun Man, through a long line of prophets, and was loved by all the people, as much for his simplicity and rugged strength of character as for his wisdom. All his years had been spent in promoting the happiness of his people. Every effort of his noble mind had been bent on teaching them the beautiful way of life. He told them the mysteries of the trees and flowers, the language of the birds that built their nests in the forests and amongst the rocks, the action of the animals of prairie and wood, the ways of the fish in the rivers, and the words of the running waters. He taught them to perfect themselves in everything they undertook, so that the handiwork of the Arctides was noted for its perfection and beauty.

Minno, though the oldest of the Children of the Sun, was as erect as the white oak that stood beside his tepee. His flashing, deep-set eyes, and the vibrant tones of his voice, with the wisdom of his words, gained him always the undivided attention of

the Council. True, he was the living mouthpiece of the Manitos, and that alone would have entitled him to respect; but it was the magnificent courage and absolute fearlessness of the man, his natural dignity and the purity of his soul, which caused the Arctides to love and honor him, and he held a place in their affections little short of idolatry.

And to Minno the Good, Minno the Prophet, Minno the Father of the Arctides, all the Children of the Sun looked for relief from Piasau, the monster, who was furiously destroying the remnants of this once powerful nation.

When Minno, a mere youth, was keeping his first fast and lonely vigil in the depths of the forest, he had been told in a dream that the time was approaching for the coming of him who should destroy the Piasau.

The manner of it was this:

For ten days Minno remained in the forest, faithfully keeping his fast and listening to the voices of the Manitos. When his fast was over he returned to the village, and as soon as he had eaten of the meat prepared for him, and drunk of the water from the Sacred Spring, he went into the Council Chamber to tell the adventures that had befallen him in the forest.

The chiefs being assembled, he was bidden to speak; and thereupon Minno, lifting up his young head, repeated quietly and modestly the words the Great Spirit had spoken to him:

"When my fast was almost over I heard a voice saying, 'Minno, Minno, not for you is the glory of war and the pleasure of the chase. Go back to the village, to those who await your returning. Wash the black paint from your eyelids, washing it too from your cheeks and the temples resting above them.

"'Put from your heart and your mind all thought of the war and its glory, and when the moon is once more a slender bow in the heavens, go to the foot of the cliff, the cliff that runs up from the valley; there by the Sacred Spring deep bury your bows and your arrows; bury your tomahawk too, and your war spear and shield you must bury.

"'I, the Great Spirit, have chosen that you shall be noted for wisdom. Quick shall your ears be to hear the voice that dwells in the forest, so may you prove yourself strong and wise in the tribe of Arctides. And finally one of your blood shall be born to the care-ridden people who shall take up the beautiful arrow and slay the monster Piasau.

"'When the day shall have dawned heralding the birth of the infant, then will I give you a sign, that the child may be known to the people. Teach and instruct him, O Minno! Guide him in truth and in wisdom; teach him the beautiful way of the life that has now been foretold you.

"'Heed ye the voice of the Spirit, Prophet of all the Arctides. Do even so as I bid you, and there shall

RECEIVING THE BLESSING OF THE SUN.

be hope for your people. Kindle the fires on the altar and wait for the child who is coming, coming to take up the arrow, coming to slay the Piasau.' "

The people of the Arctides were told of the vision of Minno, and they made a great feast to Gitche Manito, and danced and sang for many days.

From that day Minno walked apart, fasting and keeping watch, speaking the words of the Manitos.

Once more the village resumed its wonted quiet, but the people went about with cheerful faces and light hearts, feeling certain that the day was not far removed when the dream of Minno would be fulfilled.

Minno, the boy, shot into manhood so quickly that the tribe could hardly realize that the tall and muscular youth who walked so quietly amongst them was but a few short years before the child who had come to them with the Prophecy of Good.

Then one day Minno announced in the Council that he was about to marry Ahmeequa, daughter of Ogema, the leading chieftain. Great was the rejoicing, and for three days the people of Arctides feasted and made merry, to celebrate the nuptials of the young prophet and the beautiful and good Ahmeequa.

The firstborn of Minno and Ahmeequa was a son, whom they called Nirigwis, and the mother and father waited anxiously for some sign from the Manitos to tell what the future of the lad would be. The people of Arc-

tides believed the child to be the one who was to wield the Arrow of the Sun, and waited impatiently until the day when he should keep his first fast and vigil. Daily did Minno tell little Nirigwis what future would be expected of him and what his work was to be. But the pretty child shook his head gravely and said, "Dear father, it does not seem so to me. I long to play with the robins and rest by the cool blue waters. I will go to the Manitos soon, dear father, and tell them how I love the voices of the birds, and what the waters and the streams say to me. Dost think they will listen, my father?"

Then Minno would clasp the boy to his heart and beg him to give heed to the prophecy, and the boy would promise, and try to remember, and was so loving and merry that sometimes Minno almost wished that he might let his boy race and play and join in the mimic hunt with the other youths of the village. But Minno could not lose sight of the prophecy, and he prayed constantly for its fulfillment.

When the day dawned that Nirigwis was to go to the forest for his first fast and vigil, even as Minno had done, Ahmeequa brought him the mat she had woven for him to recline upon, and Minno, taking the boy's hand, led him into the deep forest, where years before the father had kept his watch, and left him there, with a last loving embrace. Ten days Nirigwis stayed alone, eating nothing, and listening for the voice of the good spirits who would reveal his future to him.

But when the tenth day ended, Nirigwis was with the Manitos and neither his father nor his mother nor any of his tribe ever beheld him again.

Bitterly did the tribe and the parents mourn for little Nirigwis, but even while they were overcome with sorrow another son was born to Minno and to Ahmeequa, and again the people were glad. The mourning was changed to rejoicing, and the feast-fires burned with a ruddy glow.

Minno was very proud and happy at the child's coming, and because he shouted so lustily, and fought so bravely with his tiny fists, the father gave him the name of Soangataha, the Strongheart, and again the tribe feasted and beat the war drums, and said, There he is! He is Soangataha, the Strongheart. Now let Piasau beware, for the days of his terror are numbered.

While Soangataha was yet a baby, Ahmeequa died, and the boy grew to manhood without the loving care of a mother. But he was a sturdy youth, and early became a leader. In the mimic chase he performed with such dash and fearlessness that sometimes Minno feared he would be killed.

He cared so much for sport and so little for learning that Minno spent days and weeks in the forest, praying that his son might become less interested in the hunt and in the tales of the warriors' great prowess, and turn his mind to the work that was appor-

tioned to him, that of slaying the Piasau. Minno told the boy what the people of Arctides expected of him; but Little Strongheart only laughed, and said he was the one appointed to slay Piasau.

"Of course I will slay the bird. Give me but the arrow and I will kill him as soon as I grow to be a man. That is why I want to hunt the buffalo, so that I may know how to shoot. See, father, the boys are playing at hunting. Let me go, dearest father, and play with them." Then Soangataha would fling his strong arms around Minno's neck, and lay his cheek against his father's, and look at him with the glorious eyes of Ahmeequa, the mother, whose image forever burned in Minno's heart. And Minno could no longer refuse the lad's importunities, and would bid him go and join the sport.

For all Minno's care, and he spared neither the boy nor himself in the lessons he tried to grave on Soangataha's heart, Strongheart cared nothing for the teachings of Wisdom. He gloried in the chase and the fierce encounters of fighting, and waited with frantic impatience the hour when he might be permitted to lead the warriors in battle.

So numerous and heroic were Strongheart's exploits that when hardly more than a youth he was made the chieftain of the Children of the Sun, and had the place of honor next to Minno in the Council Chamber.

When Strongheart had been chieftain almost a year, Pakoble, daughter of Pakablingge, one of the warriors of the Arctides, became the bride of Strongheart. Not many moons after the wedding a war was declared between the Ojibwas and the Arctides, and Strongheart hastened away to battle at the head of his braves.

However much the people of the Arctides were disappointed in the character of Strongheart, which should, according to the dream of Minno, have been studious and prayerful, instead of that of a brave and a warrior, the Children of the Sun never for an instant wavered in their faith in their prophet, and believed implicitly that his dream would in the end be fulfilled.

CHAPTER IV

PAKOBLE, THE ROSE

Most beautiful amongst all the lovely women of the Arctides was Pakoble, the Rose, wife of Strongheart and daughter of Pakablingge.

A touch of summer was on her dark oval face. The shadows of the autumn pools lurked in her deep eyes. The heavily fringed eyelids drooping languidly, the straight brows, the silky black hair sweeping almost to her ankles, and the slender hands and feet, made her so perfect in beauty that the artists of the Arctides often begged the favor of her time, that they might preserve her loveliness to future generations.

Her tall, slender figure was like the tiger lily growing beside the pond, and the meanest robe in her tepee took on a wondrous beauty when she wrapped it about her perfect shoulders.

But more beautiful, more lovely than either face or figure, were the perfect girl-soul and beautiful mind that were the heritage of Pakoble. All her words were as honey, and full of gentle wisdom. Every maiden and every matron in the little band of Arctides loved her,

and the men were her ready slaves. To Strongheart she was the flower of perfection. In her were combined all the elements of wife, mother, and sweetheart. Her tender voice, the sweetness of her caresses, and the purity of her heart filled the soul of her husband with a delight so keen, with a reverence so exalted, that his love became a great worship, and every look of her eyes rested like balm on his wild, tumultuous heart.

The air of early summer was heavy with the fragrance of ripening mandrakes. In the thick-leaved trees the bluejays scolded each other and the creek that ran by the village sang a wooing song.

Pakoble, lonely and longing for the return of Strongheart, gathered up her weaving, and calling to Shangadaya, the Ojibwa captive, who for more years than she dared count had dwelt amongst the Arctides, went out to sit on the natural terrace overlooking the prairie, hoping to see the return of the warriors.

Shangadaya, the Old One, was wrinkled and spare, with a low, narrow forehead, deeply sunken eyes, and stooping shoulders. Her hair was very thin and yellow with age, but her eyes held all the fire of youth, and her teeth gleamed white and cruel, like the teeth of some wild thing.

On a carpet of pine-boughs, strewn under a spreading elm growing near the edge of the clearing, the two

women seated themselves, weaving the mats from the rushes.

In the meadows about the village were planted fields of beans and of squashes, and in great profusion everywhere grew the tobacco-plant, its green leaves shining brilliantly in the sun.

Stretching before the weavers to the north and west were the prairie lands where grew patches of corn, the spear-like tufts of its stalks glinting in the sunshine like the weapons of an invading army.

But the martial corn, with its sword-like leaves and silken tassels, held the only suggestion of strife or combat in the village on that clear summer morning. The warriors were all away, fighting with Wabojeeg of the Ojibwas, sworn enemy of the Arctides. The land of the Ojibwas lay beside the Cold Lake, to the far north, and in the village of the Arctides only the women and the children and the oldest men were left at home.

Down in the clearing a number of Indian women were cutting weeds from around the stalks of corn. Beside the small creek that noisily pushed its way over the rock-ledge, only to lose itself again in the long wire-grass that lined its banks, a little group of Indian boys shot blunt arrows across the water, running waist-deep into the shallow pools to regain them.

Close beside cliffs were gathered the growing lads

ON A CARPET OF PINE-BOUGHS, THE TWO WOMEN SEATED THEMSELVES, WEAVING THE MATS FROM THE RUSHES.

of the village, taking part in a mimic chase, wrestling and playing leap-frog, or tumbling over one another on the soft, luscious grass in pure exuberance of animal spirits. At their sides gamboled and barked the Annemoosh, the long, lean, hungry sleepless wolf-dog, playfellow of the Red Children.

Here and there, before one or another of the tepees, an aged Indian sat squatting on the ground, patiently chipping at a piece of flint, shaping it slowly to some useful weapon of war or of the chase.

At a little distance from Pakoble sat Tioma, the Big Voice, story-teller of the tribe of Arctides. About his broad forehead, on each of his heavy cheeks, and all over his immense torso, were painted scenes from the tales he had invented. About his great paunch was drawn a robe made from the skins of many animals. This garment was gorgeously trimmed with feathers, and worn with the fur side out, an honor bestowed upon Tioma by the Council for his skill in story-telling.

"Are the playful Manitos whispering a new tale in the ears of Tioma that he is so long silent?" laughingly called Pakoble across the space.

"Tioma has already more tales in his heart than the people of the Arctides care to hear," rumbled he of the Big Voice.

"It may be that Tioma is mourning because his huge bulk keeps him from the war," croaked the Old

One. "Truly, if he should fall upon the enemy he would crush them."

"Tioma does not make war on weaklings," replied the story-teller, puffing out his fat cheeks in derision. "When he draws his bow it will not be against the Ojibwas."

"The youths of the Ojibwas would beat the paunch of Tioma like a war-drum, if he would but dare to go amongst them," quoth Shangadaya.

"The children of the Ojibwas walk sideways and are crooked, like Panaqui, son of Shangadaya," roared Tioma, struggling to his feet, and approaching the Old One with a frowning front.

At this moment a little crowd of half-grown Indian lads came running out of the friendly shadows of the wood, shouting playfully.

"Hawawa, wawa! The Pezheke! the Buffalo! the Buffalo!" they yelled, seeing Tioma; and brandishing with pretended fierceness their blunt spears of iron-wood, they charged upon the bulky story-teller in fierce imitation of the hunt.

Tioma, hearing the cries, forgot his momentary anger and spun around quickly to face his chosen friends the children. In turning he caught his foot in a tangle of grass, lost his balance, and toppled to the ground. Unable to save himself, he rolled over and over down the grassy incline, bellowing so loudly as to put to shame even Jaba Pezheke, the buffalo

bull, that for the moment he was supposed to represent.

Flying after him came the lads, laughing and shrieking with joy to see the fat Big Voice, like a giant stone, rattling and bumping adown the hillside.

When at last Tioma reached the bottom and regained his feet, he shook himself free of the grasses and brambles that clung to his robe, while the boys danced and laughed merrily about him. When he had recovered his breath, Tioma, not wishing to lose prestige, bellowed lustily:

"Who so great as Tioma! Who so quick to evade the young hunters of the Arctides! The bravest warrior would fear to rush headlong over the precipice; but not so Tioma. Fear flees like the wind before the face of Tioma."

"Hawawa, wawa!" howled the lads, running about the puffing story-teller; but Mantowesee, the Thoughtful, leader of the little band of Indian boys, said at last, "Come, Tioma, sit under the guardian pine yonder and we will bring fresh strawberries from the meadows and cold water from the brook to refresh the friend of the Young Ones."

While this scene was being enacted at the foot of the slope, Panaqui appeared on the brow of the hill behind the women.

"Big Voice should have been called the Bluejay; he is a chattering fool," sneered the Crooked One.

Pakoble started to hear the rasping voice of Panaqui, for the dwarf seldom spoke, and when he did it was in a tone so low that only Shangadaya, his mother, could understand. But now his voice was vibrant and carried even to where Tioma and the boys were gathered.

Shangadaya nodded her head in silent approval of the dwarf's words, while she kept her angry eyes on Tioma, moving away, with the children running beside him.

Panaqui, the Crooked One, son of Shangadaya, was not pleasant to look upon. His legs were short and twisted, and a hunch disfigured his back. His large bulging head was set deeply between high shoulders, from which depended long sinewy arms, all hairy, like the arms of the bear.

His nose was like the beak of a bird of prey; his teeth were sharp and pointed, like those of a wolf, his eyes like those of the badger, quick and cruel; and his small receding chin quivered repulsively when he spoke.

"Panaqui should remember it is only the tongue of the adder that is ever ready to sting," cried Pakoble, reprovingly.

"Panaqui, son of Shangadaya, may speak when it pleaseth him, since he talks with a purpose, muttered the Old One. He is not like Tioma, who rattles on with great stories to please the silly youths that they

may bring him skins, and feed him all day with the berries."

"If my people be pleased to give Tioma meat and skins in return for his stories, they do no less for the son of Shangadaya, who is not even one of their nation," said Pakoble.

"Panaqui eats the bread of the captive," snarled the Crooked One. "When he is free it will be time to remember—"

"Panaqui chatters like the squirrel," said the Old One, turning her sharp eyes on her son. "Let him heed the words of the Rose and remember."

The dwarf, catching the warning look of his mother, turned moodily away, and the women again resumed their weaving.

Presently Pakoble, dropping in her lap the rushes that she had been listlessly twining, sat with her solemn eyes gazing to the far north.

"The wife of Strongheart is silent!" said Shangadaya, the Old One, looking sharply into the face of Pakoble. "Does she fear for the safety of her warrior?"

"Is not Pakoble the daughter of Pakablingge?" said the younger woman, proudly.

"And is she not the young wife of Strongheart, who has been gone this long moon to meet Wabojeeg, the great chief of the Ojibwas, in the Land of the Cold Waters?" cried the Old One.

Shangadaya spoke angrily, for although she had spent nearly sixty years with the Arctides, yet she longed for the success of the Ojibwas, and it vexed her proud spirit greatly that Strongheart had sent back tidings of splendid victories.

"But seven moons ago Pakoble became the bride of Strongheart," replied the young wife, thoughtfully. "Strongheart is a great warrior. Have not his courage and skill in battle caused the Council to give him to wear upon his head the horns of the buffalo? There are not many on whom the Council confers such honor. The husband of Pakoble is brave and noble, and should fight the enemies of his people. But Pakoble listens not for the shouts of victory. She longs for the return of Strongheart, that she may hear his voice, and be warmed by the light of his glances."

"Pakoble is a child," chided the Old One, "and should have remained in the wigwam of her father."

"The sun will not shine while the husband of the Rose faces the arrows of his enemies," said the young woman, sadly.

"Nor will the mat be woven while the hands lie idle on the rushes," replied Shangadaya, the Old One. "Listen," she said, "and I, the Old One, will tell you a story of another wife, a woman of my own tribe, who loved too, but who was patient and did not sorrow. It is the story of Nadowawka and Naygow her husband. Great in wisdom and council was he, and

strong as the bear in battle. The scalps of his enemies hung thick at his belt. His couch was made soft with the skins of many animals his spears had slain. The young men of his tribe beheld him with awe, for he was truly a great warrior. But he fell sick and became feeble in his walk, so that when the spring came to the earth, and his people were ready to pack their wigwams from their sugar-camp in the deep forest to the open shore of the blue lake, Naygow's limbs broke under him and he could not travel with the others.

"Half a moon away over the wide prairie the journey was set for. Naygow felt that it was his last winter on earth, and he longed to see once more the beautiful lake, blue in the sunshine of spring; to breathe again the soft breezes that shook themselves out of the clouds of heaven.

"But Naygow knew that it was his lot to be left behind, that his heart would melt with sorrow in his bosom, and thus sorrowing, he would die.

"Then Nadowawka, his wife, lifted the feeble Naygow upon her shoulders. About her head she fastened the head-strap to aid in carrying her burden, and so journeyed over the prairie country toward the wide, blue waters of the lake. When her limbs would bend beneath her, shaking like a storm-swept reed, she would wait, resting.

"So at last she came to the end of the journey, and the heart of her husband was gladdened, for now

when he died he could be buried by the side of the warriors of his tribe who had gone before him."

"Nadowawka was brave and patient," said Pakoble, softly.

"Shangadaya speaks truth," said the Old One.

"Is it true, Shangadaya, that you have been given the secrets of the mysteries?" questioned Pakoble.

"Shangadaya has sat in the Jeesukaun, the lodge of the prophets, and to her ears have come, as a song, the voices of the spirit Manitos," cried the Old One, boastfully. "She has tried the strength of Wauwan, the great medicine-man of your people, and triumphed over him."

"If it is true, as you tell me, Shangadaya," cried Pakoble, "if you can look with spirit eyes into the future, tell me of Strongheart, away and at war with the Ojibwas; tell me, is he leading his warriors in battle, or has he turned his face toward the village of the Arctides? Oh, tell me, Shangadaya, whether he is thinking of his own lodge-fire, if he thinks of me, Pakoble, his wife?"

While Pakoble spoke there came a rush of wings overhead, and the shadow of a raven, flying across the sky, fell upon her face.

Shangadaya looked up quickly from her weaving and saw the flight of the raven across the sun-filled heaven, and as the bird's wings dipped for the upward flight, she rocked herself to and fro, chanting weirdly:

"Under the hollow sky,
Stretched o'er the prairie lone;
Center of glory, I,
Bleeding, disdain to groan.
But like a battle-cry,
Peals forth my thunder moan—
Baim-wa-wa!

"Star, morning star whose ray
Still with the dawn I see,
Quenchless through all the day,
Gazing, thou seest me.
Yon birds of carnage, they
Fright not my gaze from thee—
Baim-wa-wa!

"Bird in thine airy rings
Over the foeman's line,
Why do thy flapping wings
Nearer me thus incline?
Blood of the dauntless brings
Courage, O bird, to thine—
Baim-wa-wa!

"Hark to those spirit notes,
Ye high heroes divine;
Hymned from your God-like throats,
That song of praise is mine.
Mine, whose grave-pennon floats
Over the foeman's line—
Baim-wa-wa!"

"That is the death-song of the Ojibwas," cried Pakoble, clasping her slender hands and peering, with great startled eyes, into the face of the Old One. "Why comes it now to freeze the blood of Pakoble?"

"The shadow of the raven, omen of the battlefield, has fallen upon the wife of Strongheart. Nevermore will the son of Minno come to his wigwam with the sun shining in his face."

As Shangadaya spoke, Pakoble, the Rose, saw far away on the prairie a dark, slender line, like a black ribbon, slowly pushing itself through the swaying prairie grass.

"It is the warriors returning from battle," cried the Old One, whose sharp eyes had seen the oncoming of the braves long before Pakoble's misty gaze beheld them. "They do not shout and leap and dance, and fling their weapons above their heads with the joy of victory. Shangadaya spoke truly, and Strongheart will look no more upon the Rose."

Shangadaya swayed back and forth in her excitement, and began to croon "Baim-wa-wa, Baim-wa-wa."

"And see!" she shrieked, interrupting her song, "upon their shoulders they bear the body of the warrior chief; the body of the Strongheart, the husband of Pakoble. He has been called to the land of the Good Spirits. The son of Minno will look no more upon the face of the Wild Rose, the daughter of Pakablingge. No more will he bring her soft skins to lie upon, and

the glittering shells of the rivers to deck the bosom of her dress."

Not until Shangadaya had ceased speaking did Pakoble fully comprehend the import of her words, and not even then did she believe the prophecy of the Old One, until with her own eyes she saw the approaching band of warriors bearing the body of Strongheart. Realizing that her husband would never more hold her in his arms and whisper words of love, she uttered a cry so piercing, so intense, that even Shangadaya shrank to hear it. Pakoble flung herself forward on the ground, crying aloud the name of Strongheart, begging for one word from his lips; one sign to tell her that the terrible words of the captive were false.

But no voice answered Pakoble's heartbroken pleading, and onward, with their quiet burden, came the warriors of Arctides.

CHAPTER V

THE CHIEFTAIN'S FUNERAL

The returning warriors left the plain and ascended the slope, the body of their dead chieftain carried upon their shoulders.

Hearing the cries of Pakoble, the women and children of the village gathered together, waiting the coming of the warriors, while the old men and the youths hurried forward to meet the returning braves.

Preceding the solemn procession ran Wanahta, the hunter. Leaping to the projecting ledge of rock that marked the entrance to the village, he told rapidly in the expressive sign language of the Arctides the tale of the killing of Strongheart, and the return of the warriors who were bringing home the body for burial.

But it was not only because of his skill in battle that Strongheart was beloved of his people, but because of his manly beauty and his freehearted ways.

On him, too, they had rested their hopes for the destruction of Piasau, and these were again overthrown by his death. Everywhere was wailing and lamentation.

Minno alone stood quietly in the door of his tepee, giving no sign of the suffering that tore his heart beneath his ribs, as the men of Arctides brought to his tepee the body of his warrior son.

Bravely erect stood Minno, his muscular arms folded above his breast, his burning eyes fixed on the figure of Strongheart lying stiff and still beneath the chieftain's robe that such a little while before had for the first time hung upon his shoulders when he took his seat in the Council Chamber.

Pakoble came to throw herself upon the ground before Minno, her long black hair hiding the sorrow that lay like a veil on her beautiful face.

The warriors, arriving at the door of Minno's lodge, laid the body of Strongheart upon the hastily constructed bier of skins, and stood mournful and silent before the old father and the young wife.

Soon the women, gathering around Pakoble, began chanting the dirge of the tribe. Then the Wild Rose, raising her face from the earth, looked upon her husband lying cold in death.

With a cry so bitter, so mournful, so full of pain that even the warriors shuddered, Pakoble flung herself upon the body of her dead love and wailed out her lament.

"It was for him only that I lived," she cried. "Him only I loved. With my heart and my soul and my eyes I loved him.

"It was for him that I prepared with joy the fresh-killed meat and swept with boughs his lodge-fire.

"It was for him I dressed the skin of the elk, and worked with my hands the moccasins that covered his feet, even to his ankles.

"I waited each day, while the sun journeyed from the winds of the east to the winds of the west, for his return from the chase, and I rejoiced in my heart when I heard the bough crackling beneath his tread; he cast his burden at my feet, whilst his eyes spoke his love.

"It was the haunch of the deer that he cast at my feet, and I sprang to prepare the meat, that he might eat.

"My heart lay upon his and he was as the waters of the world about me, sweet and strong.

"Now that he has gone away from earth, I would go too, for life is as naught without his love to comfort me, his strength to shield me."

As Pakoble's voice died away in wailing, the warriors again took up the body of Strongheart, and brought it to the door of his own wigwam, putting it upon the bed of pine needles where he had slept in life.

As they placed it in position, a file of women, who were the appointed mourners of the tribe, came to chant the death-song of the Arctides beside the bier of their chief.

The Tawaseutha, Hill of the Dead, at the foot of the cliff near the Sacred Spring, had been opened, and in his coffin of bark and skins, Strongheart was laid to sleep, the sleep that comes of a good life amongst men.

Beside him lay his spear, which he had hurled so often at the enemy and the buffalo; here also was his tomahawk, wherewith he had finally dispatched his foe, his bow of cedar and arrows of ironwood, feathered with the golden eagle's plumage, and pointed with flint, his hunting-knife, that had cut away the beautiful skins of the buffalo when his arrows brought them low, and the paddle of his canoe to row him across the mystic waters.

Beneath his fingers lay his pouch of paints, all ready for use on his journey to the other world; at his feet the cup from which in life he had drunk from cooling streams, with a cake made of the new corn, and between his knees his flint and the torches of pine that he might have light through the dark stages of this last journey. All these things were buried with the chief to cheer his spirit as it made its way to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

Wanahta, who had been Strongheart's closest friend, spoke the funeral oration.

"Strongheart, chief of Arctides and son of Minno, has fallen," said Wanahta, "fallen because of the treachery of his enemies; but not before he had won

the fight for which he had left his wigwam and his wife. He was a good son, a brave warrior, a faithful husband. That naught may vex his spirit on its journey to the hereafter, the feast offering will be made to the merciful Father, Gheeze Manito, who will guide his steps as he goes.

"Drums will be beaten and the sacrifice made according to the customs of our fathers.

"The flesh of the white dog will be burned on the altar, and the smoke of tobacco will ascend, that the Great Spirit may be made to smile and welcome the soul of Strongheart, our chieftain.

"And ye, spirit of the noble Strongheart, to the strangers that ye meet on the way, make it known that Strongheart was Chief of Arctides, the Children of the Sun; that he sat in the Council of the tribe, and that he was of the family of Minno, of the totem of the Beaver.

"Say, also, that he was the son of Minno, the prophet, and the husband of Pakoble, daughter of Pakablingge.

"His people know that Strongheart will not go alone to the Happy Hunting Grounds. He will be met by his tribesmen, and the friends of his tribesmen, who have long since trodden the path that he must tread.

"Great will be the rejoicing in the Happy Hunting Grounds at the coming of Strongheart, and the mighty chiefs will furnish him forth with everything needful

in his new abiding-place, in the land of light and flowers and warmth.

"Be not troubled, O spirit, O Chief of the mourning Arctides, because of Pakoble, the young wife that you have left behind you. She shall henceforward be the care of your people.

"The men and the women of the tribe will soothe and comfort her in her sorrow, and will guard her tenderly, for your sake and for the sake of the son that may come to heal her sore heart, fulfilling the dream of our prophet, and slaying the dreadful Piasau.

"The warriors shall bring their best trophies to her wigwam; her brethren will daily chant the song of your tribe, telling in legend and in song the glorious deeds of Strongheart.

"Till the Spirit Moon rides in the sky will we bring to the burning fire the meat of the buffalo, the meat from our cooking, to burn whilst we are eating.

"So shall the spirits of the Happy Hunting Grounds know of thy worth and give you glad welcome amongst them, O son of Minno, the prophet."

"Farewell, farewell," cried Pakablingge, flinging wide his arms across the body of Strongheart. "Thrice farewell, O Chieftain of the Arctides. But a little while and we shall come and look upon thy face again, and sun ourselves in the warmth of thy smile. The going is forever, the staying but a little while. Glad are we that we are of thy tribe. Farewell!"

When this part of the ceremony was concluded the women resumed their wailing, while the braves removed the thongs that had bound the lid of the coffin, leaving the cover loose, so that the spirit of the chief might come forth at will.

Then the assembled warriors brought forth the food they had prepared for the dead and put it softly near the head of the grave, so that the departing spirit might eat and be strengthened for the journey.

When the last offices had been performed the Indians turned again and walked slowly and sadly to the village.

The near relatives of Strongheart, when they had again reached their tepees, covered their faces with black earth, clothed themselves in the coarse mourning-robes of the tribe, and retired from the sight of their fellow-men to fast and mourn until the coming of the Spirit Moon.

All the other villagers began the funeral feast that should last until the sun had walked four times across the heavens, while the doleful drum sounded incessantly, and the mourners chanted the death-song, slowly treading the dance of sorrow.

CHAPTER VI

THE BUFFALO-DANCE

Summer was gone and the moon of the Falling Leaf had come. Frost was painting the forest crimson, purple, and gold. Darkly brown the rustling grasses lay over the wide tumbling prairie. The corn had been garnered and stored for the time when the north-wind should strip the forest of its foliage, seal up the rivers, and hide the warm earth under a blanket of snow.

Preparations were being made in the village for the annual buffalo-hunt, one of the important events of the year. The meat of this noble animal supplied the people with food during the long winter months when there was but little hunting and game was scarce, and its hairy skin gave them clothing and covering for the tepees. To win the favor of the Spirit of the Chase, a feast of burnt meats and the incense of tobacco celebrated the departure of the hunters.

When the fire had been lighted on the Common Ground and the meats were ready, Wahwun, the medicine-man, as was the tribal custom, addressed the hunters.

"Listen, O sons of Arctides!" said Wahwun. "Harken to me, Children of the Sun. Wahwun has hidden himself for hours in the lodge of the Metas, that he might hear the good voices.

"Would you meet with success in the chase? List then what the Manitos tell you. Four sleeps to the west you must go, and when you have come to a river, let one who is chosen to lead you be dressed in the hide of Pezheke. With the buffalo-skin entire let the chosen one cover his figure. Laying then your ears to the ground you shall hear the rumble of hoof-beats. A herd like the leaves of the wood will come to the hands of the hunters.

"Go then, with your spears and arrows, in search of food for your people.

"It is not an adventure for women, for children, for old men, or weak ones. In the van of great herds, ever ready for battle, walks the guardian buffalo bull. Sharp are his black, shining horns, and heavy his deep-set shoulders. Thick and long is his mane, covering his neck in profusion. Fierce is the light of his eye and his voice is the voice of the thunder. Where he runs the earth trembles and dust rolls up like the storm.

"Then must the chosen one wait, all patiently biding the moment, wait in the tall, rank grass, close to the cliff by the river.

"All of the hunters remaining, losing no time in

"THE HUNTER SPRINGING ASIDE TO THE ROCK."

their going, let them make haste to the rear of the herd that is coming toward you.

"Everything having been done, as the voice of the Manitos orders, let him who is clad in the skin lift up his head from the grasses. Seeing him thus shall the bull believe him Pezheke, his brother. So may the chosen one lead the herd with a rush toward the river.

"Then will the buffalo bull, calling his herd that comes after, follow the hunter disguised, swift toward the cliff by the river. Up to the top of the cliff returning the hunter shall lead them.

"Then the hunter springing aside to the rock that stands like a shelter, to the stone as large as a tepee that stands on the cliff by the river, the bull with his herd shall plunge down, and we shall have meat in abundance."

When Wahwun had concluded his address a momentary hush fell on the people. His strange power of foretelling events gave to his words a meaning second only to those of Minno, and the hunters felt certain all would come about just as he predicted.

The novelty of the plan also had its attractions, and ambitious young hunters were already itching to be chosen to play the part of the decoy buffalo.

"How will you choose your leader?" questioned Pakablingge, who as the oldest warrior was generally judge of the games.

"Let it be Wanahta!" cried half a dozen voices.

"Why not Panaqui?" roared Tioma, the story-teller, who had not forgiven the Crooked One's sneering reference to the bluejay.

Meeme, the Pigeon, casting her roguish eyes at Wanahta, said laughingly, "Why not Tioma himself? No one could so easily deceive the buffalo. Give him but the horns and mane, and where will you find so excellent a Jaba?"

"Tioma! Tioma!" shrieked the children, dancing around the story-teller. "He fears not the precipice! He plunges headlong over! We have seen him, we have seen him! Let it be Tioma! Tioma!"

The anxiety and good-humored raillery were brought to a sudden close by the announcement that the matter would be settled by the game of the javelin. The decision was welcomed with shouts of joy by the hunters, who took the keenest delight in this fascinating sport, and the expert throwers hurried away to select their choicest weapons for the tournament.

The Common Ground was cleared and the villagers, old and young, forming a circle around its extreme outer edge, prepared to shout approval or disapproval as the game progressed.

Meanwhile Shangadaya was instructed to prepare the disguise that Wahwun had described, so that the victor, whoever he might be, could wear it in the dance which would follow immediately on the conclusion of the game.

The javelins were slender instruments of ironwood, five or six feet long, and about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, sharpened at one end.

The mark at which the javelins were cast was a ring about eight inches through, made of split hickory withes bound with rawhide. This ring was thrown with great force from one end of the ground, so that it rolled swiftly across the arena. He whose turn it was to try his fortune would then hurl his javelin at the hoop whilst it was in motion. The player who succeeded in ringing the most javelins was declared the victor. The game was a great favorite among the Arctides, and every youth was more or less proficient in it.

Pakablingge finally declared everything ready for the contest, and Panaqui, who had been assigned to throw the ring, took his place at the outer edge of the Common Ground, ten lengths of a deerskin from the javelin-throwers.

A dozen or more contestants entered the lists, but as the game progressed these narrowed down to three, and at last only two were left, a stout young brave, Choolu the Little Fox, and Wanahta.

After a short consultation it was decided to allow three javelins apiece in the final test. Two of the throws were to be made with the javelin held in the center and thrown with the hand raised above the shoulder.

But the third throw, if a third should be required, was to be the most difficult one of the game. In this throw the javelin was held by placing the forefinger against the end of the instrument, supporting it with the thumb and second finger. From this position it was hurled horizontally at the speeding circle.

The sun was now well toward the end of his daily journey, and Little Fox and Wanahta took their positions on the western edge of the Common Ground, that the rays might not dazzle their eyes.

The Crooked One, standing to the north the proper distance from the spearsmen, awaited the signal to let fly the hoop.

Little Fox threw first, and his javelin caught its point in the speeding ring and held it fast. His friends applauded; but when Wanahta stepped forward and raised his hand to signal that he was ready there was a respectful silence. For a moment the sinewy arm of Wanahta held the slender spear above his head; then as the little wheel came whirling across the arena, the throw was made. But Wanahta had miscalculated the time by half a second, and the point of his spear struck the forward edge of the hoop, and spear and wheel fell in a little cloud of dust, several feet apart.

A great sigh went up from the crowd, for Wanahta was a favorite with the Arctides, and Meeme turned her face away to hide the tears of disappointment in her eyes.

The second throw of Little Fox was less successful, his javelin going over the ring and striking nearly at the feet of those at the opposite side of the ground.

Wanahta was more fortunate, his second javelin catching the inside edge of the wheel and ringing it safely.

The contestants were now on an equal footing for the most difficult test, and excitement became intense; the friends of both Little Fox and Wanahta pressing forward, silent and watchful.

Little Fox stepped out briskly for his final throw, and poising his javelin carefully, gave the signal that he was ready.

As the ring shot past him he let fly the javelin, and the wheel and spear fell together in the center of the arena.

The crowd shouted in admiration of the throw, and the friends of Little Fox, feeling sure that he had won, waited impatiently for Pakablingge to come forward and examine the instruments. But when the warrior lifted up the slender spear which lay across the ring, without disturbing the ring itself in the least, a hush fell upon the assembly, for the people knew the throw of Little Fox had failed.

Wanahta selected for his final throw a slender shaft fully six feet long, oiled and rubbed until it shone like a bone in the desert. Thrice he poised it high above

his head, holding it firm and straight by the extreme end. Thrice he lowered it, measuring the distance with a practiced eye. Then he gave the signal and the ring sped from the hand of Panaqui. Like a frightened bird it flew across the arena, and straight as a ray of sunlight shot the javelin to meet it. There were the staccato sounds of hardwood meeting hardwood, a tiny puff of dust, and the spear stood quivering in the earth, the ring trembling about it.

Then indeed the people leaped and danced and shouted for joy. Wanahta had set a mark for the most skillful thrower in the game. No need for the judges here—every one might see for himself; and the victorious contestant was immediately the center of an admiring throng of men, women, and children.

Quickly Meeme brought the skin of the buffalo that Shangadaya had prepared and laid it over the shoulders of the victor. She bound the skin securely about Wanahta's neck and under his arms, with the head of the bull covering the head of the hunter, giving him the fierce likeness of the animal itself.

After Meeme had bound the thongs of the buffalo-hide firmly about the body of the victorious javelin-thrower, unseen by the rest of the band she gave to Wanahta the feather of a white pigeon that during the contest she had worn in the bosom of her dress.

As Wanahta's fingers closed on the delicate feather, he pressed the hand of the fair giver softly, and

Meeme, frightened at her boldness, dropped her shining eyes till their lashes swept her burning cheeks, and slipped quickly away into the crowd.

In another moment Wanahta had sprung to the center of the Common Ground and shouted a challenge to the surrounding braves. The hunters instantly took up the cry, and armed with tomahawks, war-clubs, and spears, began dancing and circling around the victor in imitation of the chase.

Wanahta led the dancers, and all together they sang the song of the buffalo-hunt, a wild, weird chant of pleading and exultation combined, accompanied by the beating of the war-drums and the shaking of numberless rattles. One after another the villagers joined in the festival, the women gliding gracefully about the throng of dancers, keeping time with feet and bodies to the rhythmic measure of the song.

CHAPTER VII

THE PIASAU

The hunters gone, the village became once more a scene of homely quiet. The women sewed on the skins they were cleverly fashioning into robes for themselves or their husbands, rocked the cradles of their children, and rubbed to softness the newly tanned hides between bits of fine-grained stones.

The girls busied themselves weaving baskets, the wild plum baskets and the carrying baskets, and also the meal-bowl and the water-bottle. The old men molded pots and gourds of clay of great endurance, and wrought cunningly upon them, in soft colors, pictures of fishes and birds.

The children gathered nuts in the forest, fished in the smaller streams that emptied into the Long River, ran races on the billowy prairie, or shot their arrows at targets on the Common Ground.

The growing boys talked boastingly of the future, when they too should join in the hunt, or become powerful warriors and wise chieftains, leading their tribe in action, instead of only running races across the prairie and shooting their arrows in the sun.

At evening they gathered in eager groups around Tioma, who told them wonderful adventures that had befallen in the war and in the chase. When they wearied of his stories he related the deeds of Strongheart, who so lately had gone from amongst them, recounting his virtues and the acts of fearless heroism that he had performed. The boys never tired of this, and longed to imitate the departed chieftain.

And all the people lamented Strongheart, and mourned because he had left no son to carry forward his work of killing the Piasau.

Minno was now rarely seen about the village. Since Strongheart's death he had remained almost constantly in the forest, walking alone. The loss of his son, of whom he had hoped so much for his people, was a blow to the aged prophet, and the lines of sorrow deepened in his face as time wore on.

Fatalities attributed to the evil influence of Piasau were appearing constantly. The dead bodies of young men who had gone forth in perfect health and the strength of manhood were often found, lying face downward on the velvety turf of the forest, but with no mark of a weapon upon them. Fear sat like a king in the staring eyeballs, and the muscles of the face seemed frozen with terror. Bravest of the brave in life, fearless in battle, giants in the hunt, in death their faces told a tale of horror which could have been born only of the sight of the Piasau.

Frequently canoes were caught in the whirlpools of the river, swept with irresistible force to the rapids under the high cliffs, and crushed upon the rocks, while their occupants were sucked into the whirlpool to be lost to the sight of the tribe forever.

Wahwun, the medicine-man, was always in the medicine lodge now, beating his drums, shaking his rattles, moaning the songs of lamentation, and crying in great distress to his good spirits to send relief to the Arctides.

Sometimes his voice was the droning voice of old age, pleading fitfully for succor; sometimes it swelled in volume, rolling from between his lips in such a mighty sound that the sides of the medicine lodge quivered as though shaken by a storm, while the trees of the wood vibrated with the shock of his supplications, and it seemed the whole forest sent back an answering wail. Then a piercing cold would come upon the listeners, and they would shiver and moan, and the hairs of their heads would crisp with fear.

This would be followed by long silences, in which the listeners feared that Wahwun too had been stricken dead, but suddenly his voice would be raised again, louder, more weird than before, and the villagers, catching up the refrain, would send the song into the forest, where it echoed and reëchoed until the world seemed filled with it.

In vain did the tribe pray for the triumphant notes that should proclaim the pacification of the evil spirit, but the song that might promise relief the medicine-man never uttered.

Yet however great their disappointment, the people never for a moment lost faith in Minno. To him alone the Children of the Sun now looked to free them from the curse of the dreaded Piasau.

In all the years since as a boy he had first communed with the Manitos he had never failed to advise them wisely. Implicitly they trusted in his judgment and waited for him to speak.

The kindly prophet had changed greatly during the last moon. From the day they had brought the slain Strongheart home, Minno had seldom spoken. All his hopes and desires had gone out to his brave, handsome son, and now that he had been taken from him the father was almost given over to despair.

Day after day, so long that the hearts of the tribe grew heavy with longing for a sight of his face, did Minno hide himself in the deeps of the forest, listening for the voice of the Great Spirit, that should bring words of hope for the unhappy Arctides.

But the voice was silent, and after each fast, more sorrowful and more dejected than ever, Minno returned to his people.

But one day, soon after the buffalo-hunters had

departed, Minno appeared in the village with the light of hope rekindled in his kindly eyes. He carried his head erect, and trod with the springy step of youth. As he neared the tepees Minno stopped to talk pleasantly with the women. He laughed with the children at their play. A smile dwelt upon his lips, and a glad, holy light was in his great dark eyes.

The prophet halted as he reached the lodge of Pakoble, the widow of Strongheart. When she came out to greet him, Minno tenderly embraced her, noting meanwhile, with the love of a tender parent, the beautiful soul that shone in her lustrous eyes.

"Minno is much rejoiced to-day, is it not so, father of my beloved?" said Pakoble, standing reverently before the prophet and bending her head to touch with her lips the hand she had taken between her own soft palms.

"The voice of the Great Spirit has deigned to bring good tidings to Minno," said the reverent prophet. "Minno has had good dreams. There is a glorious song in his soul. He rejoices in the future of the Children of the Sun. The voice in the forest spoke words of comfort and hope to Minno, and the Children of the Sun are soon to be greatly blessed. Not for long shall the Piasau triumph. Be patient, Pakoble, my daughter; thy heart too shall be glad."

Minno then turned away, and going to the Council Chamber, stood for a long time before the Altar of

Hasihta, and gazed with hopeful eyes upon the copper case that held the Sacred Arrow.

And suddenly the soul of Pakoble was filled as with a great illumination, and she bowed her head as waiting for a divine benediction.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BIRD OF BEAUTIFUL PLUMAGE

The moon, a perfect disk, rose slowly above the brown line of the distant hills, sent its mellow light over the rolling prairie country, threw a silver bridge across the Long River, and rested lovingly upon the Indian village sleeping softly on the hillside.

Shangadaya, the Old One, limping down from the summit of the hill, stopped suddenly and stood still, listening, with head thrust forward between her bent shoulders, her yellow-gray locks falling about her shriveled face. So standing, with her skinny hands clutching her staff, she seemed some alien from a world afar.

Deep in the wood, the whip-poor-will called plaintively. Across the river, a lone wolf sent to the stars his defiant challenge. The river flung itself musically against the base of the Piasau cliff. Wondrous noises of the forest-night, half-formed sounds, nameless and soulful, portents of mystery!

"Has the ear of the Ojibwa turned traitor, that it tells lies?" muttered the Old One. "Surely, some one called Shangadaya."

SHANGADAYA PUT OUT ONE OF HER SHRIVELED HANDS AND DREW THE CROOKED ONE CLOSE TO HER SIDE.

"Your ears are not liars, wise mother," said a shrill voice behind her. "Panaqui has been waiting for you, wishing for you since the sunset."

Without taking her eyes from the distant village, Shangadaya put out one of her shriveled, knotty hands, and drawing the Crooked One close to her side, muttered hoarsely:

"Does Panaqui know what is in the heart of Shangadaya?"

"Panaqui knows well," replied the dwarf, his small eyes a-glitter and his receding chin trembling repulsively; "for his own heart is full of hatred for the Arctides."

The Old One's fingers patted the hairy arm of her son affectionately, but her eyes now sought the fire that, burning on the Altar of Hasihta, cast a flickering light on the Guardian Pine standing near the door of the Council Chamber.

"Listen, my son. Shangadaya has been all day in the lodge of the Metas, and they have told her sweet secrets."

"I am sure of it, wise mother. Was it of the Arrow of the Sun they spoke?"

"Panaqui has the gift of his mother for discerning," croaked the Old One. "It was of the Arrow."

"And the secret of obtaining it, mother; did they tell you that?" The dwarf drew nearer as he spoke, and peered eagerly into the face of the witch.

"If Panaqui would open the casket of copper which holds the hope of Arctides, let him listen. It has been proclaimed that if one of the blood of the beaver totem stand before the Altar of Hasihta at high noon and whisper the word with which the Great Spirit sealed up this casket, the copper case will open."

"So have I heard it announced at the feasts ever since I was born," growled the dwarf.

"Panaqui is the son of Shangadaya, the Ojibwa captive?"

"Yes, mother," replied the Crooked One, impatient to know the conclusion.

"But his father was of the Arctides, of the totem of the beaver, even a brother of Minno. If Panaqui had the word he *might* make good use of it."

"And you have found the word, wise mother?"

"The Metas have been good to Shangadaya and have repaid her for her fastings."

"The word, wise mother—give it to Panaqui, that he may destroy the Arrow."

The Old One stooped till her withered lips touched the cheek of the dwarf, and whispered—

Panaqui started as if he had been stung and raised his long, hairy arms as if to ward off a blow.

"Is the son of Shangadaya a coward, that he fears the sound of a word?" cried the Old One, fiercely clutching her staff.

"Panaqui will have the Arrow," doggedly muttered the Crooked One. "The Arrow! The Arrow!"

"Brave boy! noble boy!" crooned the Old One, running her bony fingers lightly over the head of Panaqui. "The Arctides looked for one of the blood of Minno to destroy the Piasau. Minno has had good dreams of late, and the signs are auspicious. Should a son be born to Pakoble the Arrow must not wait in the casket till he is strong enough to draw a bowstring. Shangadaya has been kept for years from her people. She has been deceived, betrayed. Was it not Pakoble who said to Panaqui, 'Remember'?"

"An Ojibwa never forgets or forgives a wrong," hoarsely whispered the dwarf. "When the sun stands unclouded at the zenith—the word— Good night, wise mother. Panaqui will remember."

The Old One, crouching over her staff, watched the retreating figure of the dwarf until it disappeared in the shadows, and then bent her steps to where a torch burning in one of the larger tepees, near the center of the village, threw a feeble gleam of light through the door. As she walked, Shangadaya crooned to herself in a low, harsh voice an Ojibwa cradle-song. The light was from the tepee of Pakoble, which the Old One entered, dropping the curtains of skins behind her.

Higher and higher climbed the moon, until it stood squarely in the heavens. Then, suddenly, out of the southern sky a star shot earthward, leaving behind its

trail of luminous light. Straight toward the village came the star, and as it passed over the lodge where the torch glowed dimly, the star was a star no more, but a Bird of Beautiful Plumage.

Three times the bird circled above the lodge, and then, alighting upon it, began calling in a sweet, clear voice:

"Minno! Minno! the Good!"

Minno came from his lodge, and going a short distance in the direction of the voice, said calmly:

"Minno is here; who calls him?"

"Is the prophet of Arctides asleep, that he cannot see?" sang the bird.

Then Minno looked and saw the Bird of Beautiful Plumage sitting on the pole above the wigwam of Pakoble. And his heart was glad, for he knew the bird to be a messenger of Gitche Manito, the Great Spirit, bringing good words to his people.

"You know, Minno," continued the bird, "that for many generations a fierce monster has lain in wait to destroy the people of the tribe of Arctides."

"I know; it is the Great Piasau," replied Minno, solemnly. "Minno has looked upon the Bird of Evil."

"And because he has obeyed the voice of the Great Spirit, fasting and walking alone in the forest, he lives. The Piasau was powerless to harm him. Know then that the time is come for the fulfillment of the proph-

ecy, that a child of your blood should be born to destroy the evil."

"Long have we waited," said Minno. "But half a moon ago, while Minno slept in the forest, he was told that the first child of his blood, to be born when the moon stood fair and full above the Sacred Spring, should be gifted with power to destroy the monster."

"To-night the moon is fair and full above the Sacred Spring," replied the bird, "and now, even now, a child, a man-child, has been born to Pakoble, the Rose. He shall be called Waupello, a Child of the Sun, and by his hand shall fall the Piasau. Hasten then, Minno, to tell the Arctides, that they may make a great feast to Gitche Manito, the Merciful Father, proving their gratitude to him."

While Minno stood wrapped in contemplation of this great blessing, the bird ceased its song, and rising high in the air, circled three times again above the lodge of Pakoble. Then, flying straight into the upper air, it was lost in the hollow depths of the sky.

A moment only Minno stood, gazing in wonder after the beautiful messenger. Then he hastened joyfully to the lodge of Pakoble to look upon the child.

CHAPTER IX

THE COUNCIL

When it became known in the village that a son had been born to Pakoble in accordance with the prophecy of Minno, the people were exultant, and a great feast to Gitche Manito, the Merciful, was proclaimed that should continue for twelve days. Runners bearing painted quills, to summon the leading chiefs to Council, were sent to the other villagers of the tribe of the Arctides.

Fires of rejoicing were lighted on all the watch-towers, and pure tobacco scattered to the flames, so that for miles along the river spiral columns of incense ascended continually to heaven, bearing the prayers of the people.

When the chiefs were assembled, they seated themselves about the Council fire to smoke the Calumet as an offering to the good spirits before they proceeded with their deliberations.

Each chief, as the pipe passed into his hands, placed it between his lips, drawing deeply upon the red stem, puffing the smoke to the earth on either side in honor of the dead, and three times toward the

RISING TO HIS FEET MINNO DREW HIS ROBE OF DEER-SKIN CLOSELY ABOUT HIM.

heavens in token of their love of Gitche Manito, the Father of All. When each had smoked in his turn, they bent their eyes upon Minno, waiting in silence until he could speak.

Rising to his feet, Minno drew his robe of deer-skin closely about him, and standing thus arrayed in the rich garments of the prophet, spoke as follows:

"Children of the Great Spirit, Minno has invited you to sit in Council that he may make known to you something that shall cause your hearts to sing like the stream in the Leaf Moon.

"When Minno was yet a youth, preparing to go forth to the battle for the first time, he blackened his face for the vigil; taking the mat of rushes, the mat his mother had woven, he went to the forest to fast as the tribe has prescribed for the warriors. Greatly he longed to hear the voice of the Merciful Spirit telling him he should become a chieftain, leading his people in battle. Like a young ash were his limbs, and light his step, like the step of the panther.

"He longed to go at the head of a company of young braves, destroying the foes of Arctides, thinking, as do the young, of the scalps that should hang from his war-belt.

"But while he lay asleep on his mat in the heart of the forest, he saw in his dream, while the stars hung thick in the heavens, a Bird of Beautiful Plumage, a bird with a voice like sweet music.

"And the Bird of Beautiful Plumage said to the young man Minno: 'Not for you is the glory of war and the fierce joy of chasing the buffalo. Go back to the village, to those who await your returning. Wash in the cool blue river the black paint from your eyelids, washing it too from your lips and your cheeks and the temples above them.

"'Put from your mind all thought of glory in war or in hunting, and when the moon is once more a slender bow in the heavens, go to the foot of the cliff, the cliff that runs up from the valley, and there by the Sacred Spring bury deep your bows and your arrows; bury your tomahawk too, and your war-spear likewise you must bury.

"'I, the Great Spirit, have chosen that you shall fast and walk alone in the forest. Quick shall your ears be to hear the voice of the good Manitos, so that you may prove to be strong and wise in the Council.'

"Finished the Spirit his speaking, and Minno went back to his wigwam, washed from his face the paint, the black paint of the faster; and when the slender moon a pale crescent shone in the heavens, took he his bows and arrows, took he his spear and his paddle, also his tomahawk took he, and buried them deep in the earth.

"Now for many moons has he wrought the will of the Father of all the Arctides.

"Once my people were many, brave and patient

have they always been. And now when the limbs of Minno shake like the reed in the storm, when his eyes no more can behold unshaded the sun, the Great Spirit has deigned to bless his people. A child of the blood of Minno is born to destroy the Piasáu.

"Last night, as the Spirit had promised, while the fair moon hung in the heavens full over the Sacred Waters, a child was born to Pakoble, and lay in the arms of the mother, a man-child of the blood of Minno.

"When first the babe drew breath, out of the blue dome of heaven shot a silver star, straight to Pakoble's lodge-pole, and as it neared the earth the star, changing quickly, came as a bird with wings, a bird of beautiful plumage.

"Called to me as it came, singing, 'Minno, come forth from thy lodge, for a son has been born to Pakoble. Wise shall he be, and like the wind of the south in the seedtime, strong, gentle, and kind, driving away evil and bringing good to his people.'

"Hence have I called you together, that you might join in the feast that the joyful now are preparing, a feast to the Merciful One for this, the greatest of blessings."

When Minno had concluded, the Calumet was again passed from one to the other of the chiefs, that they might offer up incense to the Great Spirit for his goodness. Then, one after another, they arose solemnly,

and going to the lodge of Pakoble, each in turn laid before the door of her tepee his finest arrows, his softest furs, and his most beautiful feathers.

Having given their offerings, they returned to the Council Chamber, while the preparations were making for the great feast to Gitche Manito, Father of All.

CHAPTER X

FEAST OF WAUPELLO, THE FIRSTBORN

The black frost had fallen and the brown grass on the prairie spread a thick blanket over the earth. The streams were fringed with thin layers of ice, delicately figured and starred. The grouse were grown, and assembled in numberless flocks for their better protection against the approaching winter. The feathered tribes, from the great sand-hill cranes to the tiniest song-birds, were migrating southward. All day long the air was filled with the cronk of geese, the calling of mallards, and the whirring of pigeons. Thousands of blackbirds, resting from their flight, rang their silver chimes in the treetops.

The feast of thanksgiving had reached the seventh day, when a new chord was added to the great chorus of nature. It was the braves returning from the buffalo-hunt, chanting the Song of Success. Long before they could be seen the melody of their song was borne on the clear frosty air to the ears of the glad Arctides.

As the hunters came nearer, the people, listening for the words, heard them jubilantly chanting the prowess of Wanahta:

Hark ye the Song of the Hunters!
The song of the hunters returning,
Singing the gallant Wanahta,
Wanahta, the greatest of hunters.
Fearlessly faced he Pezheke,
The Jaba Pezheke, he slew him,
With his bow of the singing white cedar
And his arrow flint-pointed he slew him,
The Bull, the Jaba Pezheke.

Like a shaft from the sky sped his arrow,
Like a shaft from the bow of the Thunder;
To the feather it sank in the Jaba,
To the very tip-end of the feather.
And the Jaba Pezheke rolled over,
Rolled dead at the feet of Wanahta;
With a roar like the fall of the pine-tree,
The Jaba Pezheke fell dying;
Hence chant we the praise of Wanahta.

Hark ye the Song of the Hunters!
Ye of the tribe of Arctides.
Meat ye shall have for the winter,
Meat and the robes of Pezheke.
Build ye the fires for the feasting,
Bring forth the drums and the rattles.
Daughters of all the Arctides,
Brighten your eyes for the hunters,
Join in the praise of Wanahta.

Full, mellow, and strong came the song, and out toward the meadows hurried the people, running joyfully to meet the hunters. But another joy than that of the chase was in their hearts and another song on their lips. And back over the crisp brown grass went the glad triumphant chant of the glad ones, the Song of Wạupello:

Hark ye, O hunters returning!
Hark ye, O fearless Wanahta!
Shout for the son of Pakoble,
Shout for Waupello, the firstborn.
Blessed by the star out of heaven,
Bird of the Beautiful Plumage,
Telling to Minno, the prophet,
Telling to Minno, our father,
The son of Pakoble, Waupello,
Was born to destroy the Piasau,
The monster of evil, Piasau.
Haste ye, O hunters returning!
Haste ye with meat of Pezheke;
Cast to the fires of the altar
Bodies entire of Pezheke,
That the smell of the meat and its burning
May fill all the heavens above us
A feast to the Merciful Father,
Who gave us the son of Pakoble,
To slay with the wonderful Arrow
The terror of all the Arctides,

The monster, the bird, the Piasau.
Shout! shout! for the little Waupello,
Waupello, a Child of the Sun.

The hunters coming nearer and hearing the song, became dumb with astonishment, thinking because of their strange actions that a sudden madness had seized upon the people; but as they gathered the full meaning of the words, they lost sight of their own success, and rushed forward to join the others in their joyful demonstrations. Those who had been commissioned to carry the fruits of the chase threw their burdens to the ground and hurried forward with the others. Quickly all, warriors, hunters, and villagers, returned to the feast, chanting the Song of Waupello.

When they arrived at the common ground where the feast was being celebrated, Minno arose, and after a simple prayer of thankfulness to the Great Spirit for the safe return of the hunters, and a fresh offering of tobacco to the flames, the braves seated themselves to join in the repast.

Wanahta, standing a little apart from the others waiting for Minno to assign him a place at the feast, felt a light touch on his arm, and looking down, saw the pretty face of Meeme turned temptingly toward him. Before he could speak, she laid a slender finger to her lips, and then, standing tiptoe, whispered something in the ear of the hero of the hunt.

"A RED GLOW SWEPT INTO HIS COPPER-COLORED CHEEKS."

Wanahta started, and a red glow swept into his copper-colored cheeks.

"Do you think I might?" said the hunter, trembling and awkward for once.

"Come!" cried the Pigeon, giving the big brave's sinewy arm a gentle pinch. "It is only a pretty child and not a great Jaba that you are to look upon. And it is a great favor, I can assure you, for Minno guards his grandson as the light of his eyes."

"As he should do," replied Wanahta; "for does not the fate of all the Arctides lie in those baby fingers?"

"I should know that by this time," said Meeme, with a saucy toss of her head. "The Arctides have said and sung nothing else for the last seven days. But he is really a beautiful little fellow," said she, with a sudden change of manner, "and I thought Wanahta would be pleased at the chance to look upon him."

"So I shall be, Little Pigeon, if you think me worthy," the hunter replied, with a reverent bending of the proud head.

"For answer Minno caught hold of the Wanahta's hand and started away toward the lodge of Pakoble, glad of the opportunity to see the child whose coming had so lightened the hearts of all his tribe. Wanahta now went willingly enough, and a moment later the two stood within the tepee of Pakoble.

For a moment the big sinewy hunter stood with

bowed head beside the couch of rich furs upon which Pakoble was seated with the child in her arms.

"The Jaba, the buffalo bull that I slew, he shall go entire to the altar, a sacrifice to the Sun," whispered Wanahta; and touching with reverent fingers the delicate robe of Waupello, the hunter went softly out of the lodge.

CHAPTER XI

A CHILD OF THE SUN

The joy of the Children of the Sun over the birth of the grandson of Minno was so great that nothing else occupied their minds. From moon to moon they made feasts and sacrifices, danced and chanted hymns of thankfulness to the Great Spirit, while the flesh of the white buffalo burned continually on the altar in the Council Chamber.

Even the fear of Piasau, which for so many generations had filled their hearts, was allayed. The hunters went forth to the chase with new songs of gladness, and returned with chants of triumph, unmixed with doubt or dread.

The lodge of Pakoble had become the repository of every beautiful shell, or rare stone, or delicate feather that fell under the eyes of the people. Willing hands had enlarged the lodge, cutting for it corner-posts of spicy cedar, and stretching over them the largest elk and buffalo hides, until the home of Little Waupello was nearly as big and imposing as the Council Chamber.

Eleven months had come and gone since the birth of

the son of Strongheart, and the twelfth moon stood once more full and fair above the Sacred Spring, when again the Bird of Beautiful Plumage came to Pakoble, and said:

"Pakoble, wife of Strongheart, take the boy and bathe him in the waters of the Sacred Spring, that he may be proof against the weapons of all his enemies, and may know the ways of all the creatures of the forest. Robe him then in the garment of furs, the garment your own hands have fashioned. So shall he grow firm and strong to aim the wonderful Arrow."

Glad of heart, Pakoble hastened to do the bidding of the Bird of Beautiful Plumage. With the child in her arms, down into the valley, through the soft moonlight, prayerfully went the young mother, chanting meanwhile her love for Waupello, her firstborn. Tender her song, but in it a note of the glory awaiting her child.

"How beautiful are thy limbs," sang Pakoble, the Rose. "How delicate is thy dusky skin, O Waupello, my firstborn; and thy hair, how it glistens in the moonlight.

"Thine eyes too, Waupello, are they not deeply luminous, like pools of the river in shadow? When a youth thou art grown, they will shine like the stars of the morning. Strong shall thy hands be, strong as the withes of the white oak, strong to send to the heart of the monster the wonderful Arrow.

"Happy, thrice happy am I, my Waupello, that you,

"BATHE HIM IN THE WATERS OF THE SACRED SPRING, THAT HE MAY BE PROOF AGAINST THE WEAPONS OF ALL HIS ENEMIES."

my firstborn, are chosen, by the Great Spirit are called to free the land of Piasau."

Singing thus, Pakoble came to the green borders of the Sacred Spring, and looking up, she saw the Bird of Beautiful Plumage hovering above her and her son in the moonlight.

Deftly she spread the blanket of doeskin on the greensward, and holding Waupello tenderly above the waters, began again to chant:

"Gaze upon thyself in the Sacred Waters, Waupello, my darling, my firstborn; see how the moon has changed the spring into a bowl of silver. Deep in its brilliant depths lies the Moon's own sister, waiting with willing arms to clasp you close to her bosom."

As the body of the child touched the water, the Bird of Beautiful Plumage flew out of the sky, and dipping its wings in the Spring, scattered bright drops over the head of the mother. Then it returned to the sky, and Pakoble, wrapping Waupello in the robe of soft furs, the robe her fingers had fashioned, bore him back through the village to her lodge on the moonlit hillside.

As Waupello increased in years, the story of his destiny spread amongst all the tribes of the broad valley. Chiefs and warriors came from distant villages to look upon him and present him with gifts.

Minno was also an object of great veneration amongst them, for it was to him that the Bird of

Beautiful Plumage had first appeared and told of Waupello's coming. His wisdom in the Council had long been familiar to the chiefs of the different nations, and now that his numerous fasts and great self-denial in laying aside his weapons of war had been so signally rewarded, Minno had acquired a new dignity in the eyes of all the people.

Many tribes with whom the Arctides were at war believed Minno to be favored by the Evil as well as the Good Spirit; believed that he could summon the storm of snow to o'erwhelm or the Thunder Bird to destroy them, if they came uninvited into the country of the Arctides.

Although the Piasau was not supposed to trouble any of the Red People who were not of the tribe of Arctides, yet each Indian nation was threatened by some similar monster of earth or air, against which their weapons of war were useless. Even those tribes who hated the Children of the Sun were interested more or less in Waupello. While they had no love for the Arctides as a race, they stood in awe of a child born under such strange auspices, and longed for the time when he should strike the life from the body of the Bird of Evil.

As for Waupello, he was just a healthy, happy, Indian baby, rolling about on the rush mat in his mother's lodge, shaking his wild-gourd rattle, looking with owlish wisdom out of his big black eyes, or crow-

ing and laughing when one of the chiefs tossed him high in the air or told him wonderful stories which the baby did not in the least comprehend.

But when Waupello was old enough to understand them, Minno taught him the simpler legends of the tribe and tried gently to impress on the boy's mind the work that his people looked to him to do.

Waupello grew tall and straight as the arrows that flew from his bow. With his lithe limbs and supple body he outran all the other boys of the village. In their games and sports he was easily the victor; already his playmates had named him Little Chief and offered him a head-dress of partridge-feathers. But he put it quietly upon the head of his smallest playmate, and ran away laughing to his mother.

Sometimes Minno would take Waupello for long walks in the woods, telling him the names of the birds and animals, the trees and the flowers, the rocks and the streams.

With much patience, he taught Waupello to distinguish the voices of the good and evil Manitos that inhabited the woods and the hills.

Waupello grew very fond of the birds and the little animals that frisked about the paths or scampered along the shore of the rivers. Birds and squirrels became his ready companions, and chattered to him in a language he soon learned to understand. But of all his animal friends the beavers were most interest-

ing and instructive. "Be you as wise as a beaver," said Minno to him, "and you may know the number of the stars." And as Waupello grew older and became more familiar with the ways of the beaver, as well as the ways of thought, he saw that his grandfather had spoken truth.

Thus Waupello, heeding Minno's teachings, rapidly acquired a knowledge of the folklore of the forest; he could soon call all the birds and flowers and fishes by name, and talked with them as he wandered about the glades of the forest or dreamed on the banks of the running stream.

CHAPTER XII

THE FAIR CHILD

Waupello walked alone on the banks of the river one hazy summer afternoon, listening to the voice of the waters, where the hungry waves lapped the low shore that swept in a curving line to the north of the high cliffs, the home of the Great Piasau.

As Waupello walked along thinking of the many things Minno had told him concerning his people, he wondered if the Bird of Evil were really the cause of the fatalities ascribed to it. His eyes were fixed dreamily on the waters, but he noted neither the changing colors of the Long River nor the music of its flow. His thoughts had flown back to his great ancestor, Hasihta, who, thousands of moons before Waupello was born, had offended the Great Spirit, and brought so much suffering to his people. He thought, too, of the wonderful Arrow in the Council Chamber, the Arrow Minno had told him had never been seen or touched since it was placed in its copper case so long ago. Strange that his fingers were to be the first to take the sacred treasure from its long concealment. How beautiful it must be! What sensations should he feel when he held it in his hands!

His chain of thought was interrupted by the appearance of a strange canoe in the river a short distance above him. So suddenly had it swept into his view that Waupello imagined for a moment that he must be dreaming, and running like a deer to the banks of the stream, he gazed with wondering eyes on the queerly shaped boat. The canoe was not like those made by the Arctides, or by any other of the Indian tribes with whom Waupello was familiar. It rode high in the water, and was curved and peaked at bow and stern; but there were no paddles in sight and a bright-colored robe hung over the stern, trailing in the water.

Seated in the canoe was a little girl, but to Waupello's eyes, accustomed only to the Red Children, the little maid's dazzling skin and sun-kissed hair proclaimed her some creature to be adored and propitiated. The girl, seeing the boy on the shore, called anxiously and flung out her arms to him appealingly.

"The canoe will be crushed in the rapids," thought Waupello, "and the beautiful spirit become the prey of the Piasau." For only a moment he hesitated, then plunging into the river, the boy struck out boldly toward the rapidly drifting canoe. Swifter and swifter grew the current. The canoe, caught in the merciless eddies of the falls, shot with a great lunge toward the middle of the stream.

Waupello was as much at home in the water as his

brother, the beaver; none of the other lads in the village could keep pace with him in the swimming races. And now he exercised all his strength and skill in his endeavors to save the strange canoe and its occupant from the rocks.

Finding he could not overtake the boat, Waupello dived beneath the surface and swam swiftly downstream, thus escaping the hindrance of the waves on the surface. For half an arrow's flight he remained under water; when he once more appeared on the surface he was nearly a boat's length ahead of the canoe. Waiting till the canoe drifted up to him, Waupello put his shoulder under the side farthest from shore and struck out as best he could for the beach.

Gradually the canoe approached the right bank of the stream, and at last the prow grated on a bit of shelving beach where the river narrowed to run between the steep cliffs.

When Waupello had pulled the canoe safely up to the sandy shingle, he turned to look at the child with the fair skin and the beautiful hair. Then he saw that she was not alone. Stretched in the bottom was a man, whose hair and fair skin were a counterpart of the little girl's. But the man's face was thin and drawn, as though he had fasted for a long time. In their deepened sockets the eyes glowed like stars on a frosty night.

For a moment Waupello was at a loss to know

what to do. He spoke to the girl, but she only shook her head, and the tears, like dewdrops, sprang to her eyes. But when Waupello saw the tears on the cheeks of the girl, he forgot all his fear of her, and putting his arms around her, murmured words of comfort in the language of the Arctides, feeling that since he understood it, she would understand too.

Waupello had just decided to run to the village for help, when he saw his grandfather walking under the trees but a short distance away.

He called to Minno, and the old man came quickly toward the river. Waupello rushed half-way to meet him, and told him hurriedly of the strange creatures he had saved from being carried into the heart of the rapids.

When Minno had looked a moment upon the man in the bottom of the canoe, he said:

"Run to the village, Waupello, and tell some of the young men to come and assist in carrying the stranger. The fever of the bad Manitos sits in his eyes, and he may not walk. These people have a strange look. Perhaps they come from the good Manitos with a message for the Arctides."

Waupello sprang away like a deer, scarcely touching the earth with his nimble feet; and while the little girl's eyes still sought him in the open, he was lost in the trees of the forest.

When Waupello was gone, Minno approached the

canoe and addressed the stranger in the language of the Arctides.

"Whence comes the man of the fair skin, and why did he stay his hands from the paddles whilst the canoe was rushing upon the sharp rocks of the rapids?" questioned Minno.

The stranger made no reply to the prophet's question, but gazed wildly about, moaning in pain, trying vainly to raise his head from the bottom of the boat.

The heart of the child, which had at first shrunk in fear at the approach of the tall Indian, felt the kindly pity in his tones, and she held out her little white hands to him.

"Waubunannung, Star of the Morning!" exclaimed the prophet.

Never before had he seen so fair a vision, not even in his dreams. To him she seemed like the star come out of the eastern sky, and his lips formed the name naturally as he looked upon her.

"Waubunannung, Minno gives you welcome to the country of Arctides," said the prophet, in a whisper, as he lifted her from the boat to the beach.

Quickly Waupello returned with the young braves as Minno had requested. They were greatly excited upon seeing the strangers, with their red-gold hair and fair faces, and the queer-looking craft which had brought them so mysteriously to the shores of the Arctides village.

At a word from Minno, however, the four men, who had been walking slowly round and round the canoe, lifted it carefully to their shoulders and bore it away toward the village. The man in the canoe moaned continually and rolled his head from side to side as if in great pain.

Minno walked before them, carrying the fair child upon his broad breast and murmuring words of comfort, which, though she did not understand them, carried solace to the poor trembling little heart, and the fair maid dropped her weary head on Minno's shoulder, and put her round young arms trustingly around his bronze throat.

Beside them ran Waupello, his soft black eyes fixed with wonder and admiration upon the fair face of the little girl. In the sun her hair glinted like spun copper, and Waupello longed that he might be the wind that made so free with her tresses, or the shafts of light that, falling between the trees of the forest, played about her lips and eyes.

"How beautiful she is!" thought Waupello. "Perhaps this is one of the good Manitos Minno has told me so much about. But the good spirits come in dreams to speak to us, and Waupello does not dream. His feet are on the earth, and he runs before the canoe in which the pale stranger lies. When we are come to the village I will speak to the little sister, telling her all my tales, showing her my prettiest arrows. My

necklace of otter-teeth will I put on her shoulders; then, mayhap, she will tell me why her skin is like the flower of the water lily, and her wonderful hair like the forest leaves when the frost has touched them."

The winding path the little party were following led by the Sacred Spring, and here Minno paused for a moment. Setting the little girl upon her feet, he took from his deerskin pouch his drinking-cup of woven wire-grass. Dipping it into the cool waters, he pressed the brimming cup to the parched, fever-cracked lips of the man in the canoe.

The stranger drank greedily, muttering words that fell meaninglessly upon the ears of the Arctides.

Waupello meanwhile had snatched two leaves from an oak tree that bent above the Spring, and with a motion so dexterous that the eye could scarcely follow his movements, he formed a cup, and filling it with water, held it to the girl's lips. The child drank the cool, sparkling liquid, and then her eyes lingered lovingly on the dainty toy. Little smiles chased themselves from her lips to her eyes, and she shyly offered to return the cup; but Waupello, seeing she was pleased with what he had made, shook his head and put the cup back into her hands. The men took up the canoe again and resumed their way to the village, but the little girl was no longer carried in Minno's arms; hand in hand like friendly playmates, Waupello and the blue-eyed child ran beside the prophet.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT MYSTERY

Minno and his party had now reached the village, and the canoe-bearers, at a gesture from the prophet, put down their burden under the guardian pine that stood before the Council Chamber. Instantly they became the center of a group of curious onlookers, who plied Minno and Waupello with questions, and pointed excitedly at the strange man, the equally strange canoe, and the beautiful child, who, frightened at so many dark faces, clung to the hand of Waupello.

Minno, choosing several of the fleetest runners from the group about, gave into the hands of each a painted quill and bade them go quickly to summon the Metas of the different villages. For the unexpected arrival of these pale faces was of great moment to the Arctides, and demanded prompt and wise action.

Wahwun, the medicine-man, came hurrying from his lodge, and pushing his way through the crowd, looked long upon the man stretched in the bottom of the canoe.

"He is not of the nations of the Red Men!" de-

clared the Meta, looking straight into the eyes of Minno. "Would the father of the Arctides have him live?"

"Minno would know more of this strange being. His brain is now melting with the fever. Already the Metas have been summoned to come together in Council, that we may decide what is best to be done. Meanwhile let Shangadaya watch over the stranger until the Council is assembled," said Minno.

The Old One came immediately, and began to make the sick man as comfortable as possible, while Waupello brought to the little girl corn cakes and berries and dainty bits of meat and bade her eat.

Pakoble too came from her lodge and sat beside the children, occasionally touching gently the bright hair, and gazing with tender mother eyes upon the pretty child.

"The little white sister is very pretty," said Waupello, "but she looks sad; she shall smile." And running to his lodge he brought forth the loveliest shells and the daintiest wampum and the smallest baskets in his collection and flung them at the feet of the little girl.

"The little white sister is like a day of the Spring Moon," said the mother, lightly brushing the tears from the pale cheeks. "Now it rains, but presently the sun will shine again. Waupello must be patient."

Pakoble's gentle ways and quiet airs soon won the

confidence of Morning Star, as Minno had called her, and she forgot for the moment her recent griefs and smiled and tried to make these new friends understand her. When Waupello saw her happy again, his own face became radiant, and telling his mother that he was going to show the girl his tepee, he took his new playmate to his own beautiful lodge.

To the white child this was the most wonderful playhouse in the whole wide world. Here were lovely soft skins and arrows and bows without number, gay pots and bowls and feathers of marvelous birds, endless strings of wampum, and glittering stones, and everything that the children of the forest most love. The little maid caught sight of a tiny bow and arrow, and instantly Waupello put it into her hands. Then he tried to show her how to shoot it, but she quite surprised him by her knowledge of the implement. She shot two or three arrows, and laughed merrily when she saw Waupello running to return them. Then Waupello gave her his spear, but she did not understand the use of this instrument, and the boy showed her every trick he knew in the handling of it.

Meanwhile Shangadaya, sitting beside the boat, spread a shade of cool boughs above the sick man's face, and gave him to drink of a bitter herb tea which she had brewed.

The Metas had quickly assembled in response to the message of the painted quills, and it was decided

that Wahwun should endeavor through the exercise of his power to discover who the strangers were and whence they came.

The great medicine-man was soon ready for the ordeal, and stripped of every garment save his breech-cloth, that he wore folded tightly about his loins, he threw himself on an immense buffalo-robe stretched on the floor of the medicine lodge.

First he laid hold of one side of the skin, and folded it over him; then he took hold of the other side, folding it in like manner about his body, leaving only his head uncovered.

Wahwun then called two of the young braves to take a long cord of braided deer-thongs that lay beside him on the floor of the Council Chamber, and to wind it tightly about his body so that he was completely swathed within the buffalo-skin. Being thus bound, the Meta was taken by the feet and head and lifted into a coffin-shaped inclosure made by driving sticks into the ground. He had not lain long in this position before he began to mutter, and the snake medicine-bag placed at his head to rattle and dance about. Louder, ever louder, grew the mutterings. But now his words were strange to the ears of the listeners. He spoke no longer the language of the Arctides, nor any of the Indian dialects, but a new and foreign tongue. Having for some time continued in this manner, he raised his voice to its highest pitch, sometimes apparently

raving and sometimes muttering what seemed like prayers, till at last he became so agitated that he fairly foamed at the mouth.

He remained in this state nearly an hour, with the little group of Metas gathered around him, carefully noting his every motion.

Suddenly Wahwun sprang to his feet, shaking off his covering as if the bands with which he had been bound were burned asunder. Then in a low, firm voice he addressed the Metas in his own tongue.

"My brothers," said Wahwun, "the Great Manito has spoken to his servant. He has not indeed told him the names of those who have so suddenly come amongst us, but he has shown him the land from which they came, where there are great tribes of their people.

"Wahwun saw a beautiful country, where people like him of the strange canoe are many as the trees of the forest. He saw this one go home to his lodge, which was like the cliff yonder. And there he met another Pale Face, and they were both very wroth, and this one struck his brother with a long, thin knife; then when his brother lay dead and all bleeding at his feet, the stranger took his child and ran out of the great wigwam and away to the wide blue water, where was a canoe so large that the whole tribe of Arctides might sit in it. The canoe had white wings like a bird, and brought the man and the little girl far away from the

lodge where the bleeding man and a lamenting woman were left behind. At last the canoe in which the stranger and his child and many other people rode touched on another shore, which is like the shore the stranger left, but where no man knew that the stranger had slain his brother. And when they had rested and eaten, the stranger took from a man like himself the canoe you now see. And he gave to the man from whom he took the canoe some bits of bright metal, at which the man who received them greatly rejoiced.

"Then the stranger put into the canoe the fair child whom Minno has called Morning Star, and he also sat in the canoe, and came over a long blue water to the cold lake that lies to the north.

"When they had journeyed for two moons, always coming toward the west, the man lifted the canoe from the waters of the lake and brought it across the earth to the Long River, and so was carried to the land of the Arctides, where the eyes of Waupello beheld them.

"In all the long journey the bad Manitos never left the man who had slain his white brother. They got into his brain and threw him upon his back, so that he might no longer wield the paddle.

"This is what Wahwun has seen with the eyes the Great Manito gave him. He has spoken."

The Metas listened intently to the revelations of Wahwun, and immediately going to the Council Cham-

ber, seated themselves to smoke the Calumet and deliberate on what the ultimate destiny of the stranger should be.

In a little while Minno arose and spoke:

"The Great Spirit has sent the fair-faced stranger to the Arctides. They must give him welcome. The lodge of Minno is ready to receive him. Let him be carried thither. You, who have power to drive away bad spirits from his heart and the fever from his veins, what say you?"

"Let it be even as Minno has spoken—it is a wise thought," said Wahwun. The Metas signified their assent.

"And the child," Minno continued; "may she not rest in the lodge of Pakoble, who will be to her as a mother?"

Before the medicine-men could make a sign of approval, there came stealing into the Council Chamber a sound so soft, so mellow, so melodious that every man of the assembly bowed his head, thinking it a voice from the spirit world. Plaintively sweet, the music rose and fell on the fragrant summer air.

The sound was so new and strange that it was several minutes before even Minno, whose great soul had never known fear, strode from the Council Chamber to seek the cause of it.

The picture Minno saw as he came from the Council Chamber into the sunlight was so beautiful and

touching that the old prophet stood gazing upon it in silent wonder.

Upright in the high-peaked canoe sat the fair-haired stranger, holding to his lips a slender tube of dark wood, which discoursed music such as Minno had never heard. The stranger's long, waving hair fell in a sunny mass over his shoulders; two bright-red spots burned like tiny suns on his white cheeks, and his half-closed eyes seemed to look far away into another world.

Near him stood Waupello and the fair child, their young faces filled with the inexpressible awe born of the Great Mystery.

Slower and sweeter came the liquid notes; farther and farther the shadowy eyes looked into the soft distance, until, with a little fluttering wave of sound, the instrument fell from the nerveless fingers, the lids dropped over the sad blue eyes, and the stranger from an unknown country was no longer a stranger. He had found the solution of all Mystery in the brotherhood of Death.

CHAPTER XIV

A NEW VOICE IN THE WOODS

The Pale Face was laid to rest in the canoe that had brought him far from the passions and griefs of the world to fall asleep upon the bosom of Nature. With the belief of the Red Men that the departed spirits in the Happy Hunting Grounds would find pleasure in following the pursuits of earth, Minno was about to place the flute under the cold hand of the stranger. But the fair child, with the intuition of a softer civilization, took the instrument from him and quietly gave it to Waupello.

The boy's fingers closed eagerly over the ebony tube, and his eyes spoke the gratitude his lips could not utter.

Nothing he had ever heard or seen had made so deep an impression on Waupello as the tender melody breathed into the slender bit of polished wood by the dying man. His sensitive soul still vibrated with the melancholy harmony, and he was filled with longing to speak his thoughts in the same liquid measure.

Thus the flute became to him a new voice, with which he hoped some day to utter thoughts that now found no expression.

Day after day Waupello stole into the forest, where even the sound of the ceremonial drum in the Council Chamber or the wild song of the hunters could not reach him, and hidden among the leafy shadows, he breathed softly into the precious instrument, hoping to wake again the melody that still echoed in his soul.

For a long time only broken, fragmentary sounds came, like far-away hints of the tender song. The small bright keys that had answered so readily to the lightest touch of the stranger's white fingers refused the coaxing caresses of Waupello's slender brown ones, and he was often tempted to give up in despair. Then he bethought him to blow into the instrument a message to the winds that moaned and sighed or laughed and sang about him. And when they seemed to listen and understand, calling back to him pretty replies to the message he uttered, his heart gave a great throb of joy, and he threw himself on the ground and thanked the Great Spirit for the gift of the New Voice.

And so it came about that Waupello through the flute could converse with all things in nature in their own language, and the songs in his heart multiplied daily, and a wondrous love for everything the Great Spirit had created took possession of the boy.

One day in early Autumn, when the hazy smoke of the Peace Pipe was over all the hills and the forest was hushed with sorrow at the loss of its summer glories, Waupello took his mother to his favorite retreat on a

high bluff overlooking the river, and for the first time played for her the soft minor hymns he had learned from the winds and streams. Pakoble listened, surprised and delighted; but as the boy went on, breathing into the instrument softer and more melodious strains, the heart of the mother trembled with exquisite pain, and her eyes filled with sympathetic tears, prompted by a feeling she had never before known.

"Where did the son of Strongheart learn all these pretty melodies?" said Pakoble, when the boy finally laid the flute aside and turned to meet her approving gaze.

"From the winds of the sky, dearest mother; they sing to me of many things: of the bright stars they have visited; of far-away hills and valleys where flowers bloom all the year round and the birds never flee at the approach of the frost and the snow; from the river, dear mother, that is singing gladly on its way to the Land of the Sun, where the Red Children are never cold, but may run and play always under trees that reach down to them their sweet juicy fruits—where the feet of the people walk always on carpets of flowers."

"Where is this land, my son?"

"That has not been told to Waupello. He does not yet understand all the winds and the waters say to him, and the voice of the pretty instrument is not always clear to speak what Waupello would know. But some day, dear mother of my heart, when Waupello

has learned to know all the voices of the forest and the wide prairie, and to breathe into the grateful reed what as yet are but shadowy dreams, he will be able to tell you.

"Sometimes," continued the boy, after a moment's hesitation, "when the voice of the flute is clear, and the South Wind is heavy with fragrance, Waupello hears faintly a voice that bids him rejoice for his people; that one day he may lead them away to the land of perpetual Summer."

The mother sat silent looking wistfully down the winding vista formed by the Long River.

Wáupello took up the flute again, and looking at it intently for some time, said:

"And sometimes, mother, the flute seems to tell me of another land far across the big blue water. The white sister we have called Singing Bird, because she is so happy, and has a voice like the bobolink, has told me of it. There are great tepees, with shining walls, and woven robes of many colors, thick and soft, covering the floor. And all the people have fair skins like the white sister, and beautiful cloths and laces for robes, like those of her father."

"Singing Bird is one of the Arctides now," said Pakoble, and should forget the wicked people who made her father unhappy. With my own hands I have made her robes of the softest skins, and the hunters, who are fond of her, bring her the choicest feathers

from the forest and the prettiest shells from the beach. She loves the Children of the Sun, too, and will be happier if Waupello does not make her think of other things."

"It is not Waupello, dear mother; it is the flute. If it talks to Singing Bird of those things, what can Waupello do?"

Pakoble found no answer ready to her son's question. The mother was deeply moved by what the afternoon had shown of her son's nature, and she resolved to repeat the conversation to Minno as soon as she returned to the village.

The red sun was far down toward the prairie country as they went slowly homeward under the whispering boughs. There were tints of purple and yellow in the Indian Summer haze, and the soft sky seemed sinking gently down to caress the fading leaves.

As Waupello walked along, he breathed into the flute the thoughts inspired by the tender glances of his mother, and the rhythmical flow of the notes awoke a responsive call from the distant whip-poor-wills.

And so, with hearts full of the tender glory of the autumn, the two came back to the village.

CHAPTER XV

TIOMA, THE STORY-TELLER

"Singing Bird! Singing Bird! Come to the forest. The wind is soft in the treetops, and Waupello waits for you."

"Has Waupello the heart of a quail, that he dare not go alone? Singing Bird has been with the robins and squirrels since the torches were put out in the sky."

The merry taunt came from the extreme point of a cliff at a little distance to the east overlooking the village. Across the Long River lay the prairie country, stretching away as far as the eye could see in billowy undulations.

Waupello, half-way up the slope, ran forward until through an opening in the trees he could see the summit of the cliff. Upon a projecting rock far out upon the bluff, stood Singing Bird outlined against the sky; her red-brown hair blown free, her bare arms shining like ivory in the sun, the girl seemed to the eyes of the Indian boy a good Manito come to speak to him.

"The Singing Bird has wings to mount up to the

sky," called the boy, a tremor in his voice, inspired by a fear for the fair child's safety.

"The mole has weak eyes and hides from the sun in the earth," called back the girl, gayly. "Waupello should bind an arrow-point upon his head that he may burrow with his brother."

"Waupello has no fear for himself," said the boy, in a low tone, his bronze skin flushing under the banter.

"Then why does he stay so long in the village, when the winds are fresh and cool on the hilltops? Singing Bird has been out since first the bluejay began scolding her husband, an hour ago."

"Waupello would have followed the feet of Singing Bird through the wood, but her steps are so light they leave no record on the leaves."

The courtly speech of the Indian boy was pleasing to the fair child. It sounded like an echo of something she had heard in another life, but which she could never recall. She gazed a moment into the clear and honest eyes of the boy, and then turning suddenly, sprang lightly over the face of the rock to a projection below, and began a descent down the almost perpendicular face of the cliff.

Unheeding the boy's warning call, she continued on her way until she had covered a third of the distance to the beach below. Then halting breathless, she looked up to where the boy stood, like a bronze statue, high above her.

"Does the son of Strongheart fear to follow the Singing Bird?" she called, tossing her hair in the sun.

"The son of Strongheart knows not the word fear," answered Waupello, with characteristic pride. "But the rocks are not firm, and a foot heavier than that of Singing Bird might send an avalanche down upon her. When she has reached the shore it will be time to follow."

With another toss of her pretty head, the girl put out one daintily moccasined foot toward the rock below, but drew it back suddenly, and shrank closely against the cliff, white and trembling, her eyes staring straight before her.

Coiled on the stones a few feet distant was an enormous yellow rattlesnake. Its ugly flat head was lifted and waved ominously from side to side. The bead-like eyes glittered in the sun, and the red-forked tongue played rapidly out and in between its slightly parted jaws. But more terrifying than all came the sharp, piercing rattle that the girl well knew preceded the poisonous blow.

With eyes riveted on the snake, Singing Bird stood motionless. There was no escape from the niche in which she stood. And even had she the strength to fly she knew the slightest movement on her part meant an instant attack from the serpent.

But just as the reptile was drawing in its head for the spring the twang of a bowstring sounded, a feathery

flash of light shot down the face of the cliff, and the huge snake, with an arrow through his throat, writhed and twisted itself from the rock and rolled to the beach below.

A moment later Singing Bird was being borne up the cliff in the sinewy arms of Waupello.

"Don't cry, little White Sister," said the boy, as he placed her once more on the greensward. "What is an arrow more or less? The old men are pleased with their making, and the quiver of Waupello is always full. Come, I will play for you the songs you love best, and we will run away to the other side of the wood, so that we may forget."

The boy took his flute from the pocket his mother had made in his mantle, that he might have the instrument always with him, and walking slowly along with Singing Bird, played the merriest airs he knew.

The squirrels ran and chattered in the branches overhead and dropped down nuts as a friendly offering to the children. The jays swung in curving blue lines across the spaces; chipmunks flashed their white stripes in the sun as they ran along the fallen logs or tumbled over one another among the brambles, and Singing Bird forgot her disagreeable adventure and joined in a merry romp with her playfellows of the wood.

By a sunlit pool near the everglades the children came upon Tioma, painting the characters of a new story on his broad chest.

JUST AS THE REPTILE WAS DRAWING IN ITS HEAD FOR THE SPRING, THE TWANG OF A BOWSTRING SOUNDED, AND THE HUGE SNAKE, WITH AN ARROW THROUGH HIS THROAT. WRITHED AND TWISTED ITSELF FROM THE ROCK.

"Is there not enough of piping and squeaking among the wild creatures that our young men should go about blowing into whistles?" roared the Big Voice, halting in his work of decoration to glower good humoredly upon the intruders.

"If I were as handsome as Tioma I might find more pleasure in looking at my reflection in the pool," laughed Waupello, dropping into the dialect of the playground with the village familiar.

"Tioma shall paint himself when he pleases," cried Singing Bird, "and while we are resting he will tell us the tale that goes with the pictures."

Morning Star seated herself on the grasses, and Tioma, ever ready to please the White Sister, who was an appreciative auditor, seated himself on a grassy bank, and prepared to tell them the story of the man who came from a shell.

'There was once a snail living on the banks of the river, where he found plenty of food, and wanted nothing," began the Big Voice. "But at length the waters began to rise and overflow the banks, and although the little animal clung to a log, the flood carried them both away, and for many moons the snail floated about, not knowing where he was going. When the water fell, the poor snail was left in the mud and slime on shore. The heat of the sun came out so strong that he was soon fixed in the slime and could not stir. He could no longer get nourishment. He became oppressed

with heat and drought. He resigned himself to his fate, and prepared to die. But all at once he felt a renewed vigor. His shell burst open, and he began to rise. His head gradually rose above the ground; he felt his lower extremities assuming the character of feet and legs. Arms extended from his sides. He felt their extremities divide into fingers. In fine, he rose under the influence of one day's sun into a tall and noble man. For a while he remained in a dull and stupid state. He had but little activity, and no clear thoughts. These all came by degrees, and when his recollection returned, he resolved to travel back to his native land.

"But he was naked and ignorant. The first want he felt was hunger. He saw beasts and birds as he walked along, but he knew not how to kill them. He wished himself again a snail, for he knew how in that form to get his food. At length he became so weak, by walking and fasting, that he laid himself down on a grassy bank to die. He had not lain there long, when he heard a voice calling him by name. 'Wasbashas!' exclaimed the voice. He looked up, and beheld the Great Spirit sitting on a white moose. His eyes glistened like stars. The hair of his head shone like the sun. The man could not bear to look upon the apparition and trembled from head to foot. Again the voice spoke to him in a mild tone. 'Wasbashas! Why do you look terrified?' 'I tremble,' he replied,

'because I stand before him who raised me from the ground. I am faint and hungry — I have eaten nothing since the floods left me upon the shore, a little shell.'

"The Great Spirit here lifted up his hands, and displaying a bow and arrows, told him to look at him. At a distance sat a bird on a tree. He put an arrow to the string, and pulling it with force, brought down the beautiful object. At this moment a deer came in sight. He placed another arrow to the string and pierced the animal through. 'These,' said he, 'are your food, and these are your arms,' handing him the bow and arrows. He then instructed the man how to remove the skin of the deer, and prepare it for a garment. 'You are naked,' said he, 'and must be clothed. It is now warm, but the skies will change, and bring rains and snow and cold winds.'

"Having said this, the Spirit also imparted the gift of fire, and instructed the new man how to roast the flesh. He then placed a collar of wampum around his neck. 'This,' said he, 'is your authority over all beasts.' Having done this, the Great Spirit rose up and vanished from sight.

"Wasbashas refreshed himself, and now pursued his way to his native land. He had seated himself on the banks of the river, and was meditating on what had passed, when a large beaver rose up from

the channel and addressed him. 'Who art thou,' said the beaver, 'that comest here to disturb my ancient reign?' 'I am a man,' he replied; 'I was once a shell, a creeping shell; but who art thou?' 'I am king of the nation of beavers,' he answered. 'I lead my people up and down this stream; we are a busy people, and the river is my dominion.' 'I must divide it with you,' retorted Wasbashas. 'The Great Spirit has placed me at the head of beasts and birds, fishes and fowl, and has provided me with the power of maintaining my rights.' Here he held up the bow and arrows, and displayed the collar of shells around his neck. 'Come, come,' said the beaver, modifying his tone; 'I perceive we are brothers. Walk with me to my lodge, and refresh yourself after your journey'; and so saying, he led the way. The Snail-Man willingly obeyed his invitation, and had no reason to repent of his confidence. They soon entered a fine large village, and his host led him to the chief's lodge. It was a well-built room, of a cone-shape, and the floor nicely covered with mats. As soon as they were seated, the beaver directed his wife and daughter to prepare food for their guest.

"While this was getting ready, the beaver chief thought he would improve his opportunity by making a fast friend of so superior a being, whom he saw, at the same time, to be but a novice. He

"TIOMA TELLS STORIES TO AMUSE US."

informed him of the method they had of cutting down trees with their teeth, and of felling them across streams so as to dam up the water, and described the method of finishing their dams with leaves and clay. He also instructed him in the way of erecting lodges, and with other wise and seasonable conversation beguiled the time. His wife and daughter now entered, bringing in vessels of fresh-peeled poplar and willow and sassafras and alder bark, which is the choicest food known to them. Of this Wasbashas made a merit of eating, while his entertainer devoured it with pleasure. He was pleased with the modest looks and deportment of the chief's daughter, and her cleanly and neat attire, and her assiduous attention to the commands of her father. This was ripened into esteem by the visit he made her. A mutual attachment ensued. A union was proposed to the father, who was rejoiced to find so advantageous a match for his daughter. A great feast was prepared, to which all the beavers, and other animals on good terms with them, were invited. The Snail-Man and the Beaver-Maid were thus united, and this was the origin of the Red Man."

"And the beaver then, Waupello, was your great-great-great-great-grandmother," cried Singing Bird, opening wide her big blue eyes.

"Tioma tells stories to amuse us," replied the boy. "But the beavers are very wise, and their houses are all Tioma has pictured them."

"And is there not a painting of a beaver on the totem pole that stands before your grandfather's lodge, and do you not wear the sign of the beaver on your belt of Wampum?" roared the Big Voice. "Tioma can see as well as Wahwun, even if he does not wrap himself in a big robe and make noises like a mad Jaba."

"I like Tioma much better than the medicine-man," declared Singing Bird, going up to the fat story-teller and tapping with her finger his puffed cheek on which was an illustration of a hunter killing a bear.

Big Voice caught the girl in his arms, and swinging her to his shoulder, went bellowing along the slope, Waupello running beside him.

When Tioma and the children reached the Village it was high noon. As they passed the Council Chamber Panaqui came suddenly out of the shadow of the building, but seeing them approaching shrank closely against the trunk of the guardian tree, and with the instinct of creatures of the forest, became no more than a small knot on the rugged trunk of the pine.

Big Voice and his playfellows passed on without seeing the dwarf. No sooner was the little group out of sight than Panaqui darted to the door of the Council Chamber, and with a rapid glance upward, where the sun stood straight in the Zenith, he spun through the opening and dropped the curtains behind him.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ANGRY SKY

When Panaqui came out of the Council Chamber a few moments later, there was a mysterious hush pervading the atmosphere. A yellow-black cloud covered the sun and the earth was gray with the shadow of it. Frightened birds flew aimlessly about, and the trees shivered and seemed to huddle together with prophetic fear.

With furtive glances over his high-peaked shoulders, the Crooked One hurried across the open ground about the Council Chamber and plunged into the wood beyond.

As he disappeared, there came the ominous roll of thunder, and a band of fire tore a zigzag line through the cloud that was spreading rapidly over the heavens.

And now the tops of the trees stirred faintly, as though an angry breath had touched them, and a few drops, like great tears, plashed in the dust of the Common Ground.

The villagers, frightened by the sudden darkness that had fallen, peered anxiously from the doors of

their tepees, or hurried from one lodge to another, whispering appeals to the Great Spirit for protection or scattering red feathers of propitiation to the Spirit of Evil.

But the angry sky took no heed of them. Larger and ever larger grew the terrible cloud; deeper and ever deeper rolled the thunder; nearer and ever nearer darted the crooked shafts of light, until with the rush and roar of a thousand demons the storm broke upon the village in a flood of rain.

Wanahta, returning from the lodge of Meeme, was swinging proudly down the wooded slope to his own tepee when the storm broke. He did not feel the sudden change in the atmosphere, for his heart was throbbing with a new joy—the joy of requited love. The mother of Meeme, but an hour since, had bidden him sit beside her in the bridegroom's seat in the home lodge, which invitation assured the sinewy child of the forest that his wooing had not been in vain.

He had remained a long time in the lodge, hardly removing his eyes, eloquent with love, and glad with the return of it from the pretty face of Meeme. Few, indeed, had been the lovers' words, the hunter's heart being too full of this new and radiant happiness to allow of speech; and the saucy Pigeon, feeling in her ever merry heart the sacredness of the hour, forgot for the moment the good-natured raillery that came so naturally to her rosy lips, and with which she had so long

kept the brave heart of Wanahta trembling between hope and despair.

But Wanahta, once out in the woods, which he knew so well and to which he could tell his thoughts without embarrassment, let his lips speak the words that his heart sang so gayly, and he strode along under the friendly boughs chanting bits of the wild minor melodies of the chase, or breaking forth into the glorious challenge of the battlefield—a grand, free soul of the forest and plain, crowned with the chaplet of Love.

When the storm broke in all its sudden fury, Wanahta fairly reveled in the tumult of it; he threw up his proud head that he might sniff the damp air and feel the rain beating against his throbbing temples. He came across Panaqui, crouching under a shriveled cedar, shivering and gibbering with fright, and laughed aloud at what he took to be the dwarf's abject cowardice.

But the happy madness of Wanahta received a sudden check, and even his seasoned nerves were shaken as the storm, pausing for an instant as if to gather unto itself new strength, sent forth a ball of liquid fire, that burst with a deafening crash directly over the roof of the Council Chamber. A roar that shook the earth followed instantly, and the tall pine-tree that guarded the entrance to the sacred temple burst into flames, reddening the sky, and casting a wild and weird light over the surrounding country.

The tepees stood in fiery silhouette outlined against the flooded earth, and the grass on the distant prairie was like a sea of flame.

And above the roar of the storm came the wailing of the tribe.

Panaqui threw himself face downward on the ground, groveling, moaning, supplicating, his misshapen body in its contortions resembling some evil gnome fighting an invisible enemy.

Then the storm passed, the sun shone out clear and bright in the blue heavens. But the Guardian Pine, at the door of the Council Chamber still cast its red glow over the drenched and broken tepees.

Wanahta hurried into the village, where he found Minno and Waupello going about among the wailing people, quieting their fears and offering words of comfort.

As soon as wood could be found dry enough to permit of kindling a fire, a feast to the Angry Sky was prepared, and every one brought sacrificial offerings calculated to win again the favor of the Great Spirit. But not until the burning pine fell crashing across the Common Ground and was burned to ashes did peace return to the village.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RETURN OF THE PIASAU

A few days after the storm which had destroyed the Guardian Pine, Pakablingge was found dead on the beach below the cliff where the Piasau dwelt. The features of the old warrior were distorted with fear, and in his wide-open, staring eyes was clearly photographed the image of the monster. Not a detail of the description of the Piasau, as handed down from generation to generation since first the bird was created, was lacking in the picture reflected on the eyeballs of the dead warrior.

There were the widespread wings, the scale-covered body, the long talons, the forked horns and tail, the grinning jaws, and the fierce glaring eyes of the Piasau they had so long feared, but which none of the Arctides save Minno had ever looked upon and lived.

Those who were courageous enough to gaze for a moment upon the picture, fled horrified to tell the less daring, and consternation seized once more upon the hearts of the nation.

This was the first appearance of the Piasau in Arctides since the birth of Waupello, and the Arctides

had begun to hope that the mere coming of the chosen child had freed them from the bird's persecutions. Its unexpected return, to claim as a victim one of the oldest and bravest of their warriors, filled the people with greater fear than they had ever before known, and everything save thoughts of the bird and the boy born to destroy it was driven from their minds.

They buried the grand old warrior with befitting ceremonies, but even while the drums were being beaten and the feast celebrated the eyes of the people of Arctides were turned upon Waupello, and his name mingled with their songs and supplications.

Minno appreciated more than any one else the terror that would spread among the people with the return of the Piasau. Pakablingge had been his warmest friend, and his death, too, hung heavy upon the heart of the old prophet. Minno reproached himself for not hastening the education of Waupello, so that he might have been prepared for his work before the coming of this last bereavement, and resolved to waste no further time, but to give himself over entirely to the boy's instruction.

That nothing should interfere with his plans, Minno suggested to Waupello that the boy give to his playmates his collection of rare bows, arrows, feathers, skins, and shells, abandon his tepee, and come to dwell in the lodge of his grandfather. Waupello unhesitatingly acted upon the old prophet's counsel, feeling

now for the first time the full responsibility of his mission, and the two henceforth became constant companions. All boyish sports and lighter enjoyments were laid aside, and the prophet and the boy commenced living on the most frugal fare, so that their minds might be filled with noble thoughts and aspirations.

They spent whole days and nights in the woods or upon the broad prairies, listening, discoursing, seeking for the Fount of Wisdom, that they might go forward toward perfection.

Sometimes, as Waupello and his grandfather sat together in the evening on the grassy banks of the Long River, the boy would take from his robe the precious flute that had now become as his own voice, and play soft melodies that to Minno seemed liquid words, revealing the thoughts of Waupello's soul. And the old prophet, casting his beautiful eyes up to the twinkling stars, would offer silent prayers for the fulfillment of the prophecy, and the ultimate saving of their people.

When Waupello and the prophet would return, on rare occasions, to the village, the people stood silent where they passed, gazing upon them with adoring eyes. Before the lodge of Minno was always heaped the best gifts of the field and of the chase, but the wants of the old man and Waupello were now so few and simple that the offerings of their tribesmen became

sacrificial, and were given to the fire of supplication that now was kept continually burning on the Common Ground.

As the days went by, Waupello's appearance underwent a marked change. His sinewy frame grew more tense; the lines of his strong, sweet face became more delicate and a spiritual melancholy dwelt in the depths of his large dark eyes. His voice became daily more clear and melodious, like the tones of his flute, so that his lightest words might be heard above the shouts of the hunters.

Sometimes he would speak to the people, telling them in a simple, unaffected way not to lose hope, nor to be discouraged, for the Great Spirit loved them, and would in the end, if they would have faith, show them a smiling countenance. He told them too of the country of which he had spoken to his mother that Autumn day in the wood; of that beautiful Land of the Sun to which he hoped some day to lead them, and where the terrible winters of their present home were never known.

The Arctides dwelt lovingly on his words, and believed them; and as the boy had at one time said the journey to the new country would be made down the Long River, they set about building canoes sufficient to carry the whole tribe of Arctides thither. For this purpose they stripped the bark of the red elm and the birch trees and carried it to the village to be converted

into canoes. The bottoms of the canoes were made of one piece of bark, and with the keels perfectly round, but the sides were of many pieces, overlapping like a sheath, and the sheathed edges sewn together with thin filaments of elm bark, or with the strong roots of the tamarack. Then the Arctides covered the seams over thoroughly with the gum of the fir-tree, and made it perfectly tight, so that it would ride upon the water light as a feather.

Everybody in the village was now employed in the building of canoes and more than a thousand were put under way. Some were about twenty-five feet long, and some were thirty-five feet long, each family building a canoe of sufficient size to carry its own members. The canoes were made strong and safe, for the journey might be a long one, and they felt that the time was approaching when great things were about to befall the people of Arctides.

Some of the boats were made of untanned hides of the buffalo and the elk, and each family followed its own inclinations in the building and adornment of their boats.

But the canoe on which the highest art and utmost ingenuity of the tribe was expended was the craft which the people destined to carry the prophet Minno, Waupello, Pakoble, and Singing Bird to their new abiding-place.

This canoe was built of the silver birch, the most

gorgeous bark that can be obtained for the purpose, and was twenty deerskins in length. In its widest part, six of the broadest warriors of the tribe might have stood shoulder to shoulder. It was ornamented with the finest pictures the best artists of the tribe could paint, or carvers could design.

At the bow was a carving of a bird with outspread pinions, while at the stern was the figure of a warrior letting fly an arrow. So gorgeous a boat had never been made by the Arctides before, and each man and woman and child of the tribe did some part of the work, every one contributing something to the canoe. So great was the love for Waupello; so rooted their faith in his words.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SUPREME FESTIVAL

Winter came and sealed up the river, built thick white walls along the length of the ravines, caught the swelling prairie in a giant's grip and held it in frozen undulations, threw cloaks of ermine about the shoulders of the pines and the fir-trees, reared mammoth figures along the face of the cliffs, and challenged the stars of heaven in the multitude of its scintillations.

Winter came into the village, too, and tore furiously at the skins of the tepees, covered the Common Ground waist-deep with frozen drifts and blocked the trail that led to the Sacred Spring. But the spring itself the Winter could not conquer. No matter how cold the Northwind blew, or how heavy the frost that settled upon the earth, the water in the Sacred Spring sparkled free in the sun, and danced merrily over the rocks to run away under the frozen drifts of snow that arched the brook on its journey to the Long River. When it was coldest, the Spring blew a misty breath up into Winter's face in sheer defiance of his power.

Like the Sacred Spring, the spirits of the people of Arctides defied the storm and cold, and gathered around the blazing knots of pine and cedar, reinforced

with seasoned sticks of harder timber; they wove and carved and chipped at flints, and told tales of love and adventure, until even the hurrying winds seemed tempted to linger and listen.

So had the days gone by, and now Winter was almost over, and the feast of the Arctides' New Year was about to be celebrated. This was the Feast of Supreme Belief, and was held generally in February, just before the coming of the Spring. The festival continued seven days, revealing in its ceremonies nearly every feature in the religious system of the nation, the principal sacrifice being a white buffalo or deer, such animals being held sacred by the tribe. But as seldom was there a hunter found fearless enough to take the life of one of these rare and beautiful creatures, a white dog was usually substituted.

For this occasion, however, it seemed a good Manito had supplied the object of sacrifice, for on the very day the Council set the time for the festival a snow-white deer was provided. On that day Wanahta, returning from following the trail of a stag, surprised a wildcat in the act of dispatching a white doe, and sending an arrow through the heart of the fierce beast, brought home its victim, and laid it reverently before the Altar in the Council Chamber.

The New Year's festival was ushered in by two of the keepers of the faith, who visited every tepee in and about the village every morning during the seven

days' feast. These messengers were disguised in bear-skins and buffalo-hides, which were secured around their heads with wreaths of cornhusks, and then gathered in loose folds about the body; wreaths of cornhusks were also adjusted around their elbows and wrists and thighs and ankles. Robed in this manner, they were painted by two of the matrons of Arctides, who were also keepers of the faith. They were then commissioned by the Council to go forth and announce the jubilee. Taking corn-pounders in their hands, they went out separately on the morning of the day appointed for the opening of the Supreme Festival to perform their duty. Upon entering a tepee they saluted the inmates in a formal manner, after which they struck the floor with the corn-pounder to invoke silence and secure attention, when they thus addressed them:

"Listen, listen, listen! The ceremonies which the Great Spirit has commanded are about to commence. Prepare your houses. Clear away the rubbish. Drive out all evil animals. We wish nothing to hinder or obstruct the coming observances. We enjoin upon every one to obey our requirements. Should any of your friends be taken sick and die, we command you not to mourn for them, nor allow any of your friends to mourn; but lay the body aside and enjoy the coming ceremonies with us. When they are over we will mourn with you."

After singing the song of thanksgiving they passed out.

For the present ceremony this pleasant duty was assigned to Little Fox, whom Wanahta had defeated in the javelin contest, and Mantoweesee, the Thoughtful, who had now grown into a fine young hunter, second only to Wanahta in the science of woodcraft. Pakoble, and Meeme, who was now the wife of Wanahta, were chosen by the messengers to decorate them. In this task they were assisted by Singing Bird, with many laughing suggestions as to the costuming and decorations, while Shandagaya brought the skins and the husks, or stood at hand with the paints.

The first day of the festival dawned clear and crisp, the snow sparkling brightly in the sun that shone with unusual luster. A great pyre of cedar logs, trimmed with the tips of pine boughs, stood in the center of the Common Ground, ready to receive the sacrifice of the white deer.

When the people were assembled, Minno and Waupello came and stood by the altar, while Wanahta, the hunter, lifted the body of the doe and laid it upon the bier. Then while Wahwun stood ready with a lighted torch to fire the sacred pile, Minno stretched forth his hands and thanked the Great Spirit for his mercy and goodness, asking that the sacrifices they were about to make might find favor in his sight. He implored the protection of the merciful Father on his children, and

that his love might be around them as a shield against all evil; he spoke of the suffering and terror caused by the awful Piasau, and prayed for its speedy destruction. After invoking a blessing on the pursuits of the people for the coming year, he lifted up his face to the sun and stood silent. Every one present followed him in thus standing a moment with outstretched arms, their faces turned to the sun, while Wahwun applied the torch to the sacrificial fire.

Then the drums began to beat, the rattles to sound, and the people, chanting the thanksgiving hymn of the Supreme Festival, began moving slowly about the altar. But as the music increased the chanting grew louder, the motions of the worshipers more rapid and pronounced, until in a short time the whole concourse of people was in an ecstasy of exultation.

And now the flames about the altar, as if in emulation of the spirit of the worshipers, rising swiftly over the seasoned logs of cedar, burst into a transparent arc of fire, in whose opalescent center rested the body of the sacrifice.

For a moment the glorious walls of flame, forming a perfect arch, seemed to stand still about the delicate white animal, and then, translated by the intense heat, the sacred body instantly disappeared, and a spiral column of blue smoke, rising straight toward the central point of the heavens, took upward to the sun the offering of the Arctides.

CHAPTER XIX

TIOMA AND THE CHILDREN

The third day of the Supreme Festival was devoted to the children, and on the Common Ground, where the snow by the continued tramping had become packed to a solid mass or disappeared altogether, their games went forward from the rising to the setting of the sun. In the evening Tioma was to entertain them, and as the weather was still cold it was decided to place the Council Chamber at their disposal.

Thither then Tioma with the help of Mantowesee carried his stage, made of buffalo-hides stretched over stringers of white cedar, setting it up at the north side of the edifice opposite to and facing the Altar of Hasihta. Thither too he carried many pine torches, with which he surrounded his little rostrum; he also built up a couch of skins across the back of the stage for use in his performance.

Then selecting from his pouch a quantity of dried peppermint leaves, he ground them to a fine powder between his huge palms. This powder was to be burned as incense to the merry Manitos, for no enterprise of moment, whether serious or for amusement, was ever

entered upon by the Arctides without first making an offering or libation of some kind to the ruling spirit of the occasion.

Everything being prepared, Tioma dispatched Mantowesee to inform the children that he was in readiness to receive them.

The children of the village needed no urging to attend an entertainment where Tioma was to be the chief actor. Big Voice was to the little ones the very prince of entertainers. He peopled their young minds with a host of elfs, goblins, good and bad Manitos: delightful people with whom no one else seemed to be the least bit familiar, but whom Tioma knew intimately and whom he always introduced to his eager-eyed, open-eared listeners, the children of Arctides.

And to have for their sole use the glorious Council Chamber, wherein they had seen so many mighty chiefs assembled in solemn conclave, decked in their magnificent robes and plumes of the Golden Eagle, was a treat beyond their wildest anticipations!

Soon they came trooping at the heels of Mantowesee, who chided them softly for their noisy mirth at the very door of the Council Chamber, and bade them enter quietly lest they should disturb the Sacred Spirits that were supposed to frequent the temple.

Singing Bird was almost the last to arrive, and was invited by Tioma to a seat on a fawnskin that he had spread for the purpose, directly in front of the stage.

Tioma's audience quite filled the floor of the Council Chamber not set apart for the religious ceremonies, a narrow space which no one save the prophets and priests ever invaded. Tioma's little auditors squatted themselves on the soft skins close to one another and prepared to enjoy to the fullest extent whatever Big Voice had to offer.

When the children were all in and seated quietly, Tioma lighted a small earthenware lamp filled with bear's oil, and when the flames were burning blue and ghostly, he threw small pinches of the powdered peppermint upon them, which filled the whole edifice with a most delightful odor.

Then the torches about the stage were lighted, and Big Voice, mounting the platform, announced that he would tell the children the story of the boy who set a snare for the sun.

At this there was a smothered exclamation of delight, and Tioma, prepared to impersonate all the characters of the drama, began the following legend:

"At the time when the animals reigned in the earth they had killed all but a girl and her little brother, and these two were living in fear and seclusion. The boy was a perfect pigmy, and never grew beyond the stature of a small infant, but the girl increased with her years, so that the labor of providing food and lodging devolved wholly on her. She went out daily to get wood for their lodge-fire, and took her little brother

along that no accident might happen to him; for he was too little to leave alone. A big bird might have flown away with him. She made him a bow and arrows, and said to him one day:

"'I will leave you behind where I have been chopping, but you must hide yourself. When you see the snowbirds come to pick the worms out of the wood where I have been chopping, shoot one of the birds and bring it home.'

"He obeyed her, and tried his best to kill one, but came home unsuccessful. She told him he must not despair, but try again the next day. She accordingly left him at the same place next day. Toward nightfall she heard his little footsteps on the snow, and he came in exultingly, and threw down one of the birds which he had killed.

"'My sister,' said he, 'I wish you to skin it and stretch the skin, and when I have killed more, I will have a coat made out of them.'

"'But what shall we do with the body?' said she; for as yet men had not begun to eat animal food, but lived on vegetables alone.

"'Cut it in two,' he answered, 'and season our pottage with half of it at a time.'

"She did so. The boy, who was of a very small stature, continued his efforts, and succeeded in killing ten birds, out of the skins of which his sister made him a little coat.

"'Sister,' said he one day, 'we are all alone in the world. Is there nobody else living?' She told him that those they feared and who had destroyed their relatives lived in a certain quarter, and that he must by no means go in that direction. This only served to inflame his curiosity, and raise his ambition, and he soon after took his bow and arrows and went away.

"After walking a long time and meeting nothing, he became tired, and lay down on a knoll, where the sun had melted the snow. He fell fast asleep; and while sleeping, the sun beat so hot upon him that it singed and dried up his bird-skin coat, so that when he awoke and stretched himself, he felt bound in it, as it were. When he looked down and saw the damage done to his coat, he flew into a passion and upbraided the sun, and vowed vengeance against it.

"'Do not think you are too high!' he cried to the sun. 'I shall revenge myself.'

"On coming home, he related his disaster to his sister, and lamented bitterly the spoiling of his coat. He would not eat. He lay down as one that fasts, and did not stir or move his position for ten days, though she tried all she could to arouse him. At the end of ten days he turned over, and then lay ten days on the other side. When he got up, he told his sister to make him a snare, for he meant to catch the sun. She said she had nothing, but finally recollected a little piece of dried deer's sinew that her father had left, which she

soon made into a string suitable for a noose. But the moment she showed it to him he told her it would not do, and bid her get something else. She said she had nothing—nothing at all. At last she thought of her hair, and pulling some of it out of her head made a string. But he instantly said it would not answer, and bid her pettishly, and with authority, make him a noose. She told him there was nothing to make it of, and went out of the lodge.

"But while going about in the wood she came upon the bones of the birds they had eaten, and stripping away the tough cords that clung to the bones she hastened back to the tepee and gave them braided to her brother.

"The moment he saw this curious braid he was delighted. 'This will do,' he said, and immediately began pulling the braid through his hands. As fast as he drew, it changed into a red metal cord, like the copper Minno tells us our ancestors used to make pots and kettles of. This cord he wound around his body and shoulders till he had a large quantity. He then prepared himself, and set out a little after midnight, that he might catch the sun before it rose. He fixed his snare on a spot just where the sun should strike the land before it rose above the earth. And sure enough he caught the sun, so that it was held fast in the cord and did not rise.

"The animals who ruled the earth were immedi-

ately put into a great commotion. They had no light. They called a council to debate upon the matter, and to appoint some one to go and cut the cord—for this was a very hazardous enterprise, as the rays of the sun would burn whoever came so near to them. At last the dormouse undertook it, for at this time the dormouse was the largest animal in the world. When it stood up it looked like a mountain.

"When the dormouse got to the place where the sun was snared, its back began to smoke and burn with the intensity of the heat, and the top of its body was reduced to enormous heaps of ashes. It succeeded, however, in cutting the cord with its teeth, and freeing the sun, but it was reduced to a very small size, and has remained so ever since."

As Tioma proceeded with the story, sometimes talking in a small voice like the girl, then high and piping like the boy, then roaring like the dormouse when he was a mammoth, and again in the wee small voice of the dormouse after it had been burned to a tiny shape, the children laughed, sighed, wept, and applauded, so that Tioma found it at times difficult to continue.

When it was all over, they went chattering out of the Council Chamber, and when they found the snow coming down softly in great white flakes, they ran about trying to catch the feathery particles, tumbling over each other, and emerging from the drifts with their deerskin robes white with the newly fallen snow.

But Singing Bird, her mind full of her friend and playmate Waupello, did not join in the merry romp, but walked quietly beside Tioma, her sober face a great contrast to the merry ones about her.

Past the lodge of Minno trooped the happy band of children, filling the air with the sweet music of their young voices. The old prophet, hearing the joyous rout, nodded and smiled over at Waupello, where he sat in deep contemplation of the future of his people and their ultimate happiness. And Waupello, dropping his face in his hands, prayed to the Great Spirit to hasten the time when the destruction of the people should cease, and the joy of the children should dwell in every heart.

The glad shouts of the children had long since died away on the frosty air, and the village was wrapped in slumber, when Waupello, lifting his head, said:

"Minno, I hear a voice calling me to come and walk alone, that I may be told the secret of the casket."

"It may be no more than the echo of the children's voices in your ears," said the old prophet, loath to have the boy go forth in the storm.

"'Tis the voice of the Great Spirit, O Minno, and Waupello longs for the message." And drawing his robe about him, Waupello went forth in the night alone.

CHAPTER XX

THE WORD

When morning broke, the quiet snow had ceased to fall, but a soft white carpet lay over the hard frozen crust of the long winter and the whole earth was mantled in a fleece of dazzling white.

The wise ones nodded their heads knowingly, and said the maple-sap would run freely this year and the earth would be rich for the harvest.

The spectacle of the dissolution of the snow-white doe at the sacrifice was considered a special recognition by the Great Spirit of the offering, and the people of Arctides continued the Supreme Festival with hearts filled with thankfulness.

But Minno could not bring his mind to dwell upon these things. His thoughts turned constantly to Waupello, alone in the snow-bound forest, or on the frozen plain, and a silent prayer was ever on the old prophet's lips for the beloved boy's safety.

Minno, being the chief prophet and father of the Arctides, his presence was absolutely necessary at the opening of all the ceremonies, but once these duties

LISTENING FOR THE WORD.

were performed, he returned to his lodge and gave his soul to supplication.

But the Supreme Festival came to an end at last, and the villagers, worn out by the attendant excitement, slept soundly in their tepees.

The night seemed strangely silent after the noisy beating of drums, the shoutings and chantings of the ceremonies, and the crackling of the sacrificial fires, which had continued almost without intermission for seven days.

The first faint colors of dawn were stealing up the sky, when Minno, waking from a light sleep, saw Waupello standing in the center of the lodge. The light of the sacerdotal lamp, now kept burning continually in the lodge of the Prophet, shone full on the spiritual face of the boy, which bore such a lofty and inspired expression that Minno was thrilled with the sublimity of it.

Rising from his couch, the prophet would have thrown himself at the feet of this Child of the Sun, but Waupello, putting his arm about the shoulders of Minno, gently forced him back upon the bed of skins, and seating himself beside his grandfather, said in his flute-like tones:

"Minno, rejoice, for thy prayers for the people are answered. In the silence of the forest Waupello has seen the Bird of Beautiful Plumage. It has told him the way he should go. His duty is clear before him.

Three days he will rest in your lodge. On the fourth let the people assemble, and then when our father, the Sun, looks down from his height in the heavens, at the Altar of Hasihta, the Sun-Man, the casket will open before them."

As Waupello spoke, the light that illumined his face was imparted to that of the prophet, and as the music of the young voice died away, Minno rose, and brought the meat of nuts and the sweet juice of berries and spread them before Waupello.

And the Child of the Sun having broken his fast, lay down upon the couch of skins and fell sweetly asleep. Then Minno went forth in the glorious light of the morning to proclaim the glad news to all the tribe of Arctides.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ARROW OF THE SUN

The day for which the Arctides so long had waited, the day which was to see the opening of the casket and the delivery into the hands of Waupello the wonderful Arrow of the Sun, was come at last.

Since early morning the people had been gathering upon the Common Ground until every man and woman of the tribe was present.

But no chanting of songs or beating of drums disturbed the quiet of the forest or echoed amongst the cliffs. The time was too intense for outward ceremonies. The people had suffered so long, hoping against hope for the arrival of this hour, that now it was at hand the sublimity of it all filled them with awe beyond the power of utterance.

Twice had the hearts of the present generation swelled high with hope, only to meet with bitter disappointment. The gentle Nirigwis, too frail and spiritual to endure his initial fast, had been taken early by the Good Manitos, and the noble but warlike Strongheart had paid the penalty of his ambition with death on the field of battle.

Could it be that the Great Spirit had another disappointment in store for them? But no; in Waupello they saw the gentle mind of Nirigwis and the manly strength and heroic valor of Strongheart combined. Surely he would not fail them. His life had been such as to inspire the confidence of the most careless or skeptical. If now at the supreme moment doubts thrust themselves upon the minds of the people, it was more because the certainty of fulfillment was too blissful a thought to be borne without pain. For hours they stood in a compact line, reaching from the center of the village to the spring-brook that bordered the prairie, their faces gray with suppressed emotion, their eyes fixed on the Council Chamber, waiting till the sun mounting slowly up the sky should approach the meridian. Then the great curtain of the Council Chamber would be drawn aside and in solemn procession the people would file by the Altar of Hasihta and look upon the copper case which held the one Hope of the Children of the Sun.

And now from the upper end of the village in the direction of the medicine lodge came the sound of the ceremonial drums, and Wahwun, wearing the complete dress of the Chief of the Metas, appeared, followed by the lesser medicine-men of the tribe. He came proudly down the slope, his plumed head-dress trailing behind him, his medicine-bag, made of the skins of many birds and reptiles, held like a shield upon

his breast. The Metas took a position at the right of the Common Ground, facing east.

Next came Wanahta, who had been promoted to the place made vacant by the death of Pakablingge, that of Chief Warrior. Supported by Little Fox, he led the warriors of the tribe, all painted and equipped for battle.

Next came Mantowesee, leading the hunters, and after them Tioma, wearing the most gorgeous headdress ever seen in the village and with an entirely new set of illustrations covering his whole upper body.

A line was soon formed, with the different groups taking their places in the order named, the curtains of the Council Chamber were drawn aside, and to the solemn beating of drums and the chant of the hymn of triumph, the procession, led by Wahwun, moved forward, the villagers bringing up the rear.

At the door of the Council Chamber Wahwun paused to raise his hands and lift his face to the sun, a gesture to be followed by each of the Arctides before entering the Chamber. Then he passed on, turning squarely to the right as he passed under the arch, and again to the left when he was on line with the totem pole of the tribe that stood opposite the Shield of the Sun. As he passed the Altar he raised his medicine-bag and shook it fiercely to frighten away any evil Manitos that might be lurking near. Then with a suspicious glance at the small copper case in which

long ago had been placed the Arrow to be sealed with the mystical word, he passed on. Turning squarely again before the great Shield of the Sun, Wahwun seated himself on a soft cushion of skins near the eastern entrance, the other Metas following his example.

The warriors, led by Wanahta, turned to the right before the Shield of the Sun and ranged themselves along the southern wall, quite filling the space forward to a line with the Altar. The hunters, led by Mantowesee, forming in a compact body on the left of the Altar.

Tioma, now the head of the procession, led the people slowly around the interior of the Chamber, halting at the western entrance. Thus in a short time they were packed in a solid mass along the northern wall as far forward as the center of the room, the bright headfeathers of the young men rising here and there above the brown background of the soft tanned robes of the women.

Every foot of ground in the interior of the building was now covered with the exception of the passageway and a space about the Altar reserved to the Prophet Minno and his immediate relatives. Outside, the people gathered as closely to the entrances as they could get, until there was not standing-room sufficient for an arrow's flight, either to the east or the west of the Council Chamber.

All this time not a word had been spoken; the most

perfect order prevailed everywhere; the low roll of the ceremonial drum and the rhythmic swish of light moccasined feet passing over the skins laid on the floor of the Chamber accentuating rather than disturbing the solemn silence.

Soon even these sounds were hushed, for Minno had entered the hall from the east, arrayed in the ceremonial robes of his high office. Approaching the Altar of Hasihta, the old prophet paused and with uplifted face invoked the blessing of the Sun. Then taking his place behind the Altar he stood erect, looking with soulful eyes upon the expectant people.

Following him came Pakoble, a proud, glad light in her eyes, and by her side walked Singing Bird, her fair skin and red-brown tresses in striking contrast to the bronze faces and straight black hair of all the others.

After invoking the blessing of the Sun, Pakoble and the fair child went to stand near Memee, who occupied a point of vantage a little in advance of the front rows, facing the Altar.

And now Waupello came. How brave and noble he looked as he moved quietly forward to the Altar and held up his fine young face for the blessing! About his lithe, supple figure the sacred cloak of white beaver clung in graceful folds; a chaplet of wampum was bound about his shapely head, and on his breast hung a glittering Shield of the Sun, But all this was forgotten when, standing erect beside the Altar, he looked into

the faces of the almost breathless people. There was a glory in his gaze that sent a thrill to every heart, and a sigh that was felt more than heard trembled on the air—a great unworded prayer of love and hope and supplication.

Something now, or hearts will break. Minno felt this, and raised his hands appealingly to heaven. Then slowly the boy turned toward the casket, and meekly bowing his head, whispered the word. Silently, slowly, the seal of the Sun upon the casket parted, silently the lid lifted until the interior of the casket stood revealed. Tremblingly the boy raised his eyes; reverently he reached forth his hand. Then an ashen pallor swept over the delicate bronze cheek and a look of anguish leaped into his expectant eyes.

"Minno! the Arrow is gone!"

Like the cry of a stricken hare the heartbroken wail struck upon the ears of the people. There was an instant of silence, followed by a fluttering sigh. Then came a fearful choking sound, as though fingers of steel were clutching at every throat. The last hope of a stricken nation had been snatched from its grasp and the blood was freezing in the veins of the people.

The revulsion came, and a sudden desire for vengeance set fire to the tense nerves and flamed from the overstrained eyes. The nation had been cheated of its destiny and demanded a victim in return.

The people were beginning to stir now, not like

human beings, but like beasts of prey, cautiously, restlessly. Their eyes fell on Panaqui, who had glided forward into the open space, and a voice cried hoarsely:

"Panaqui! the Crooked One, he is an evil spirit!"

"Let him be burned! the Crooked One! the Crooked One!" demanded another.

The restless movement increased, and the face of the dwarf grew livid, while his repulsive chin quivered with fear. He knew the temper of the people and recognized the danger he was in. Suddenly his eyes fell on Singing Bird, and pointing his long hairy finger at the fair child, he cried:

"Not Panaqui but the Singing Bird is the bad Manito. Panaqui is an Indian."

The result was instantaneous. Here was a tangible clew to the overthrow of their high hopes. An alien, a waif from an unknown country, differing from them in every way, a bad Manito indeed.

With the snarl of hungry wolves, a hundred men strained forward, stretching out fierce hands to grasp the fair child. Women shrieked and gibbered and cried out for her blood.

"To the flames with the bad Manito!" screamed the Old One, her white teeth glistening between her blue, parched lips. Anything to turn the minds of the people from her son. "Have you forgotten how pleased the Great Spirit was with the white doe? Here is another ready for the sacrifice. Let the cedar logs be

made ready! When the bad Manito is gone, the Arrow will return."

The reference to the loss of the Arrow completed the delirium that had seized on the people, and the cries for the life of Singing Bird became a roar that shook the Council Chamber.

Minno, broken in body and in spirit, hurried from the Altar to face the maddened crowd. But even the loved prophet was swept aside in the mad frenzy.

Singing Bird, running to the side of Waupello, clung to his hand, pale and trembling with fright. Wanahta, snatching a sacred spear from behind the Altar, faced the howling multitude like a stag at bay. Pakoble lay like one dead in the arms of Mantowesee.

But suddenly above the howls and shrieks and fierce demands for blood there rose, like the clear notes of the flute he loved so well, the voice of Waupello.

"Hark, Children of Arctides! Hark to the words of the Spirit!"

Firm and sweet the youthful tones rang out distinct but sweet above the tumult.

"Hark to the voice of the Spirit! The word that opened the casket is as strong on the lips of the Evil as on the lips of the Good. The Singing Bird, free in the forest, has never a thought that could harm you. The free serpent gives you fair warning; 'tis the serpent you tread on that stings. And if there be one of Arctides who never did wrong to a brother, let him stand

"HARK TO THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT! .... THE SINGING BIRD HAS NEVER A THOUGHT THAT COULD HARM YOU."

forth by the Altar. He shall have the fair child to the flames."

Sweetly solemn the clear voice rose and swelled and floated away over the heads of the people, standing dumbly now, stilled, they knew not why. And when the words had died away in the distance, the melody of them remained to fill the Council Chamber with a music strange and soothing.

Then one after another the listeners went quietly out of the Chamber, even to Minno, the prophet. And the Child of the Sun stood alone by the empty casket.

CHAPTER XXII

ALL VOICES MERGE IN ONE

A dull apathy settled upon the tribe after the terrible scene in the Council Chamber. The people still hunted and fished, made pots, and wove grass and rushes, but they did it all in a hopeless, spiritless sort of way that told plainly enough how numb their hearts were. Their anticipations had been so keen and the blow had been so sudden that these children of nature must have been more than human not to have been deadened by the stroke. It was not surprising that their exaltation, which had continued through the week of the Supreme Feast and culminated in the mysterious opening of the casket, should have been changed to sudden madness at the betrayal of their hopes. A frightened herd of deer will turn to rend and trample to death one of its number wounded in the flight. Overstrained nerves are sensitive, and the nerves as well as the hearts of Arctides had been sorely tried.

Minno had become suddenly old. The words proclaiming the loss of the Arrow had pierced his soul and broken his proud spirit. His trust in the Great Spirit was so implicit so simple, so childlike, that he could not

understand the absence of the Arrow from the casket. He did not lose faith in the Merciful Father, because that was impossible to one who had so long felt the dear heart of nature beating warmly against his own. He could not doubt, because he had witnessed the parting of the seal and the lifting of the lid in obedience to the word upon the lips of Waupello. He remembered too the voice of Shangadaya calling in the Council Chamber, "An evil spirit has taken the Arrow," and he would grope blindly toward some solution of the mystery.

Pakoble, with the true instincts of a mother-heart, laid hold of the words of Waupello, and repeated them over and over to herself, feeling sure that they held the key to the secret.

"The serpent that is free gives you warning, 'tis the serpent you tread on that stings." What was it in the brief sentences that stilled the tumult and sent the people shamefaced away? Pakoble recognized the inherent force of the words and felt certain they referred in some way to Shangadaya and Panaqui. But that was as far as she could go.

Whatever Waupello knew or felt, he kept his own counsel. The absence of the Arrow from the casket had given him a great shock, but in the scene of fury that followed he seemed to have caught at least a portion of the truth, and in a few simple words to have conveyed it to others, even in their madness.

But whatever he knew or suspected, he gave no sign, but wandered about the woods, breathing tender melodies into his flute or sat thoughtfully silent on the high cliff overlooking the river.

Minno was Waupello's confidant, but not even to him did the boy say more than served to cheer and comfort the broken-hearted old man.

One day, after a long talk with Minno, Waupello went into the forest, and building with his own hands an altar of stone, he laid upon it the boughs of red cedar and spruce. When the fire was burning, he sprinkled upon it the dust of pure tobacco as a peace offering to the Great Spirit. Then holding up his face for the blessing of the Sun, he laid upon the flames the beautiful flute that had now become the voice of his soul. It was his first great self-sacrifice; and when the cruel flames ate into the polished wood that had for so long received his confidences, the boy's heart sank within him and he groaned aloud, while his fingers beat trembling measures on the empty air. Then he knew why the Great Spirit had demanded the sacrifice of the flute, and he began to chant in his own voice a song of sorrow which had lain mute in his heart since he was a boy.

So Waupello found another voice, or received back the voice of his boyhood, and with it a greater and more perfect appreciation of the human things of life.

He now found himself singing the songs he had

HE LAID UPON THE FLAMES THE BEAUTIFUL FLUTE THAT HAD NOW BECOME THE VOICE OF HIS SOUL.

learned in childhood, the rhythmic chorus of the hunt or the weird strains of the war-dance. He hunted up Wanahta, too, and borrowing a bow and a quiver filled with arrows, he went out to hunt on the broad prairie.

Again he joined the javelin-throwers on the Common Ground, ran races with Mantowesee, and wrestled with the sinewest youths of the tribe. The childlike pleasures of Pakoble's tepee were renewed, and he took great delight in bringing the laughter to his mother's lips or challenging the wit and fun of Singing Bird. All the ordinary pursuits and employments of his boyhood Waupello enjoyed now with a new understanding, and life flowed on evenly and smoothly again.

But withal he did not forget the prophecy nor give over his plans for destroying the Piasau.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FIGHT ON THE CLIFF

Waupello grew once more sturdy and strong. The tan of wind and sun deepened the rich bronze of his complexion and his eyes glowed and sparkled with the joy of healthful life. He climbed the hills and followed the trail with Mantowesee, or made long journeys to the border lands of Arctides to see that the Ojibwas did not encroach upon the hunting-grounds of the Children of the Sun.

He made for himself a new bow from a piece of second-growth hickory that had been seasoning in the lodge of Wanahta almost since Waupello was born. The bow was strung with the sinews of the wildcat shot by Wanahta the day preceding the Supreme Festival. The old men gave Waupello their most perfectly chipped flints for his arrow-heads, and Singing Bird helped him to feather them with tips of eagle-plumes. His rawhide quiver she decorated with many fanciful designs, and trimmed the thongs by which it was to hang over his shoulders with strings of precious wampum.

" When the Arrow of the Sun is fitted to his bow-

string Waupello will have nothing more to wish for," cried the youth to his mother when his equipment was finally completed and they had all gathered round to admire it.

A shade of sadness swept over the mother's face as the scene in the Council Chamber rose before her, but she pressed the hands of her handsome son, and gazed proudly and lovingly into his honest, fearless eyes.

"When Waupello goes again for the Wonderful Arrow," cried Singing Bird, "he need not look to see the White Sister among his admirers. She has no wish to be burned for the pleasure of the Old One and her crooked son, Panaqui," and with a light laugh the happy-hearted girl threw, spear-wise, an eagle's feather straight at the head of Waupello. The shot was a good one, and would have struck home had not Waupello dodged quickly aside.

"The Singing Bird should enter the lists in the game of javelins," cried the boy. "There she might win all the darts in the village."

"And give them to Waupello, who has none of his own, but must borrow from Wanahta and Mantowesee," gayly replied the fair child, shaking her loosely bound hair until it shone again.

"Is the son of Strongheart preparing to make war on the Ojibwas, that he is trimming his bow and quiver with the plumes of the eagle?" roared Tioma, thrusting his decorated head and shoulders into the lodge.

"Not to-day, Big Voice," said the boy. "Sometime Waupello may lead the warriors against the enemies of his people in defense of their liberties, but to-day we go to the woods to be with the birds and squirrels. If Tioma has a new tale to tell he may come with us."

"Do, do, good Tioma!" cried Singing Bird, clapping her hands together and dancing coaxingly about Big Voice. "You shall have all the dried berries and corn-cakes reserved for Singing Bird if you will come."

Tioma willingly accepted the invitation, for besides being fond of dried berries and corn-cakes, his huge chest was swelling with a tale he had invented over-night, and with which he hoped to win new laurels, as well as cakes and fruit.

Everything was soon in readiness, and Pakoble, Waupello, Singing Bird, and Tioma started on the jaunt. But first they went to call on Minno and tell him of their prospective outing, as well as to see that he lacked nothing for his comfort. The old prophet was feeble now, and rarely left his lodge except to take part in the religious ceremonies, so that they could not hope to coax him from his lodge.

On their way through the village they were joined by Wanahta and Meeme, and in the pleasant spring weather the happy little party passed into the shade of the forest.

The squirrels welcomed them with much chattering

and frisking of bushy tails; the rabbits left off nibbling the tender leaves to run beside them, or sat up on their haunches looking at them curiously out of big, solemn eyes.

It was a joyous day of the most joyous season of the year, and the friends whom triumphs and defeats had bound together so closely forgot for the time that evil had ever been in the world.

Then they saw Panaqui under a tangle of vines, and a different look came into Waupello's face, and he ran toward the Crooked One, crying:

"The Arrow, Panaqui; give me the Arrow of the Sun!" But the dwarf slipped into the vines and disappeared. Waupello's companions were curious to know the cause of his demanding the Arrow of Panaqui, but forbore to question him, and the incident was soon forgotten in the pleasant excitement of the day.

The afternoon was wellnigh spent, and Tioma was about to begin his new story, when they saw Mantowesee running toward them, crying in a low, frightened voice, "The Piasau! the Piasau!"

Consternation seized on the hearts of the little group that only a moment before had been filled with happiness, and drawing about the young hunter they waited breathlessly for the name of the Monster's latest victim.

It proved to be Little Fox. He had been gone from the village but a short time when he was found

dead, with a look upon his face which told only too truly of the return of the Bird of Evil.

So deeply interested were the others in Mantowesee's recital of the tragedy, that for some moments they did not notice the absence of Waupello. When they came to search for him he could nowhere be found.

Anguish seized the heart of Pakoble, and all feared, they knew not what. Loudly they called upon Waupello, but no answer came to cheer their listening ears, and only the echoes replied, "Waupello."

So the little band, heavy-hearted and overcome by this additional sorrow, retraced their steps to the village, from which they had so recently come with laughter and song.

The return of the Piasau filled Waupello with rage such as he had never before known. When he had heard what Mantowesee had to say of the death of Little Fox a stern look came into the boy's eyes, and turning quickly about he strode away into the forest. He had always had a horror of the Piasau, but now he felt that had not some evil spirit thwarted him he might ere this have destroyed the Evil Bird, and he hated it with an indescribable fury, and burned with a mad desire to find the one who had desecrated the casket and either secure the Arrow or be revenged on the thief.

"If I might only find the Arrow!" he cried. Then he ran on and on, taking no note of where he was

going, until he found himself on a bluff that rose abruptly to the east. He climbed the declivity and stood at last upon a single flat rock, not much larger than a buffalo-hide, that projected over the face of the cliff.

Far below ran the Long River, dimpling and smiling in the sun. From its farther shore stretched the receding prairie, green with the new grass of the spring.

It was a pleasant view, and Waupello stood for a moment on the eminence to enjoy it. But the memory of the cruel Piasau returned to drive every pleasant thought from his mind, and again he cried aloud:

"If only I could find the Arrow!"

As if in response to his exclamation, a small stone struck at his feet, rolled over the edge of the rock and shot down to the ragged shore below. Waupello, noting its fall, tried to imagine what the sensation would be if the stone were a quick instead of a dead thing. Then wondering from whence it came, he turned to behold the dwarf, Panaqui, a deer's length away, stooping as if preparing to spring upon him. The big hairy arms of the Crooked One were drawn back close to his breast and his short muscular legs were bent under him, ready to throw the whole weight of his ugly body against the unresisting figure of the boy.

Waupello thought of the stone in its rapid descent from the cliff, and for an instant his brain reeled and

a black shadow fell over his eyes. Then the scene in the Council Chamber came back to him, and he seemed to hear again the harsh voice of the Crooked One demanding the life of Singing Bird.

He heard, too, the words of the Spirit he had spoken then without a clear knowledge of their meaning, and as they flashed into his brain he knew the truth.

"The Arrow, Panaqui," he cried, fiercely; "the Arrow of the Sun!"

"Do you think Panaqui a fool, like Tioma, that he is pleased to do the bidding of the Arctides for a handful of berries and a cup of water? The Piasau is safe to feed on the hated Arctides. Panaqui will keep the Arrow."

Waupello felt a furious desire to catch up the grinning dwarf and shake the secret from him, but his better nature triumphed, and he said quietly:

"If Panaqui will restore the Arrow, he may go where he chooses. The Arctides will then gladly give him his liberty."

"And make him straight and tall like Wanahta, or lithe and fleet like Waupello," sneered the Crooked One.

"That they cannot do."

"Neither then can Panaqui restore the Arrow."

"What if Waupello should take it," cried the boy, moving a step nearer the Crooked One.

"Not while Panaqui lives," and with the snarl of a rabid wolf Panaqui threw himself upon Waupello in an effort to force him over the face of the cliff.

Lithe and supple as a panther, trained in all the sports of the Common Ground, as well as in the dangers of the chase, Waupello was a match for any ordinary antagonist. But the dwarf, while much beneath him in height, was big and strong of body, and his long hairy arms were knotted with muscles like the trunk of a black oak tree.

The two came together near the center of the rock, but the force of the dwarf's spring crowded Waupello backward so far that as he bent to get a better hold of Panaqui's misshapen body Waupello could plainly see the shore-line far below them as they hung over the projecting rock. But his young limbs were firm and hard with recent training, and the spirit of his many fastings and vigils gave additional strength to his youthful frame; his brain was cool and his nerve steady as he clung to the rock and pulled himself free of the dwarf's embrace.

Again they clinched, and Waupello, forcing his hand under Panaqui's left arm and across the small of his back, grasped the right arm of the Crooked One in a firm grip. Then with a quick turn of his supple body he drew Panaqui around so that they were back to back. The dwarf sought frantically to reach the slender throat of his antagonist with his free hand,

knowing well the advantage such a grip with his long knotted fingers would give him.

But Waupello stooped quickly forward, raising the dwarf clear of the ground; then catching one of the short legs by the ankle he whirled the body upward. There was the sound of breaking bones, a fierce gasp, a howl of rage and pain, and then Waupello, lifting the body of the Crooked One high above his head, hurled it over the cliff. As the form of Panaqui shot out into space there was a musical ring on the rock, and looking down Waupello saw lying at his feet the Arrow of the Sun.

WAUPELLO, LIFTING THE BODY OF THE CROOKED ONE HIGH ABOVE HIS HEAD, HURLED IT OVER THE CLIFF.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DEATH OF THE PIASAU

There was joy in the village of Arctides when Waupello came upon the Common Ground and announced that at last he had possession of the Wonderful Arrow. It now seemed certain the hated Piasau was to be destroyed, and everybody went about with a smiling face and beaming eyes.

Minno, to whom Waupello had first related the good news, seemed to have grown strangely young again, and was now constantly to be seen in the Council Chamber or at the feasts of thanksgiving that were being celebrated in the village of Arctides.

Wanahta and Mantowesee seemed to be everywhere at once, shouting with the hunters, chanting with the warriors, or leaping and dancing with the children, to whom this unusual festival was as surprising as it was welcome.

Tioma roared the story of Waupello's heroic achievement before every tepee, and Wahwun shook his medicine-bag and looked as wise and consequential as if he, and not Waupello, were the hero of the occasion.

Pakoble's joy was too sacred for the general eye, and she sat in her lodge looking with wondering eyes upon Waupello whenever he was with her, and softly murmuring his praises when he was beyond the sound of her voice.

Singing Bird was the only one who refused to lionize her old playmate; and while in her heart she gloried in his strength and courage, she pretended to think but lightly of his latest achievement, and tossing her golden head, said, teasingly, that she could have done quite as well herself, if she had only been consulted.

The joy was so universal and so complete that the people lost sight of the danger to Waupello. Their faith in the Great Spirit was absolute, and their prayers having been answered so far, they did not waver in their belief that Waupello would emerge unharmed and victorious in his eventual encounter with the Piasau.

Waupello immediately set about making careful preparations for the destruction of the Bird of Evil. He first saw to it that his bow was perfect in shape and fiber and that the cord was the very best that could be made. With Minno he went to the foot of the great cliff where the Piasau dwelt. The cave in which the Bird of Evil was supposed to make its nest was midway in the perpendicular face of an immense rock that rose from a shelf in the face of the cliff, nearly an arrow's flight from the beach below.

To reach this shelf by scaling the face of the cliff was impossible, and Waupello, in order that he might attack the monster in its stronghold, decided to be lowered from the top of the cliff by means of leather thongs. Minno and Pakoble were not inclined to favor this plan, and pleaded with the boy to wait until the Piasau came forth of his own accord, when he might be destroyed with less danger to Waupello. But Waupello, now that the Arrow was in his hands, would listen to no suggestion of delay, and the others were forced to abide by his decision.

Wanahta and Mantowesee therefore set to work braiding a cable of the strands of the deerskin, with which to lower Waupello to the shelf in midair. Several days were required for this task, but finally it was completed, and the long, slender cord that would have sustained the weight of a buffalo bull was brought to Waupello.

Meanwhile, the building of the canoes, which had ceased with the loss of the Arrow, was once more resumed, for the Arctides were confident Waupello had told them nothing but truth, and they looked anxiously forward to the day when they should embark for the journey to the land of perpetual summer.

Early one morning Waupello arose, and after receiving the blessing of the sun and burning incense to the Great Spirit, he took the Wonderful Arrow and stole quietly out of the lodge without awakening Minno.

At the outskirts of the village he found Wanahta and Mantowesee waiting for him, carrying his deerskin cable, and without a word the three went away through the forest toward the cliff where dwelt the Piasau. Waupello had told no one on which day he had decided to attack the monster, so that provided he was unable to find the bird the people would not suffer another disappointment.

But Singing Bird, who was always up with the birds, saw the three friends going through the forest, Wanahta carrying the cable and Mantowesee the bow of Waupello, and divining their mission, she ran to the village to tell Pakoble. As Singing Bird passed the medicine-man's lodge she almost ran into Wahwun and Shangadaya standing at the entrance to the Chamber of Mysteries. The Old One was pleading and threatening by turns, while the medicine-man, shaking his snakeskin bag before him as if for protection, was trying to drive the witch away. The Old One, seeing Singing Bird, raised her staff threateningly, and the frightened child ran as fast as she could to the lodge of Pakoble, where she fell sobbing into the arms of the Rose.

Pakoble soothed the child and drew from her the story of her morning's adventure.

When the mother learned that Waupello had gone to make the attack on the Piasau her heart trembled

with anxiety for his safety, for now she realized fully the danger of the undertaking.

Shangadaya's actions added to her fears, for the Old One had the powers of a meta and hated Waupello beyond every one else.

To Minno the Rose hastened to repeat what Singing Bird had told her, and soon the villagers were made aware of the importance of the hour, and assembled to renew their offerings and plead with the Great Spirit for the boy's success.

Having finished this duty, they went quietly but hopefully to the beach below the cliff, wherein the den of the Piasau was, and turning their faces to the sun for the blessing, breathlessly awaited the appearance of Waupello.

Just as the sun reached the zenith Waupello appeared on the apex of the cliff. How small and slender he appeared, outlined against the sky. Like the voice of the southwind a sigh went up from the people crowding the beach, the warriors trembled and the women hid their faces. Those brave enough to look, saw Waupello stretch forth his hands and lift his face to receive the blessing. Then Wanahta and Mantowesee appeared, and after adjusting the noose about Waupello's body and giving him his bow, they lowered him over the face of the cliff, and he swung clear of the rocks, descending quickly to the shelf below.

The moment he felt the firm rock under his feet Waupello cast off the noose, and it was drawn up as he had ordered. Then throwing aside his quiver which he had swung at his shoulder, that his every movement might be free, Waupello, his beautiful brown body glistening in the sun, holding fast to the Arrow of the Sun, turned his face toward the cave where the Piasau dwelt, and cried:

"Bird of Evil, Waupello has come to meet you. Waupello, a child of Hasihta. Waupello, a child of the Sun! Come forth, O dreaded Piasau, come forth to the bow of the morning, come forth to the Arrow of light."

Waupello's voice in its purity and sweetness fell like drops of sparkling water on the hearts of the people far below, and a sense of assured rest came to them, and they all gazed upward, confident of the result.

A rumble like the tramp of many buffalo answered the boy's challenge. The sound was so strange and terrible that all the people fell upon their faces, and Waupello alone stood up to face the monster.

The roaring increased in volume, and then with a sound like the rushing of many winds, the Piasau darted from the mouth of the cave, and spreading its immense green wings and opening wide its hideous mouth, it reared its fearful form before Waupello. From its eyes shot fan-shaped shafts of fire and its teeth shone white and murderous behind its grinning lips.

Then the clear-eyed boy, standing fair and straight in the warm sunshine, quickly fitted the Arrow of the Sun to his bowstring, and drawing it to the head let fly full in the face of the monster.

The shaft sped straight to the mark, and as it struck against the hard scales of the bird there was a dazzling flash of light, a quiver shook the giant form of the Piasau, followed instantly by a dark red glow over the entire surface of the monster. The color changed rapidly from red to pink, then to pale blue, then to white, until the bird from tip to tip of its widespread wings was a transparent mass of liquid fire. The heat thrown off by the glowing mass was so intense that Waupello's hair crisped and his bowstring snapped asunder. Then the light of the bird's body changed to a dull ashen color and disappeared altogether, and there remained only a handful of charred bones scattered over the rock where the Piasau had stood but a moment before.

But when Waupello's eyes, which had been nearly blinded by the heat and the dazzling light of the burning bird, were clear again, he saw seared deep into the face of the cliff where the Bird of Evil had stood the perfect figure of the Piasau.

CHAPTER XXV

THE DEPARTURE

The Long River was alive with canoes; from the bend below the cliff where the brook from the Sacred Spring emptied into the river, the shore-line as far as the eye could see was bordered with canoes. Now down from the village of Arctides came the roll of the ceremonial drums and the happy chant of thanksgiving. Nearer and nearer came the music, and then out of the cool, green forest to the pleasant meadow-land moved the children of Arctides. At their head marched Waupello, his robe of white beaver trailing gracefully from his young shoulders, his brows bound with the chaplet of wampum. The prophet came next, erect and strong again, his ceremonial robes lending to the old man an air of supreme majesty. Mantowesee, holding aloft the Shield of the Sun, walked in the rear of the prophet.

Then came Pakoble and Singing Bird, followed by Wanahta and Meeme. Wahwun, resplendent in eagle plumes, buffalo-horns, and rich fur robes, and with his medicine-bag held before him, moved proudly along. And there was Tioma, too, newly illustrated for the

occasion, his big voice sounding above all the others the glad chant of the people.

Following these came a procession of the faithful bearing on frames constructed of cedar and buffalo-hides the sacred relics of the Council Chamber. Others carried the ceremonial and war drums and numerous gourds and skin rattles, the music of which filled the soft air with pleasing sounds.

The imposing procession filed into the plain, the people of Arctides bringing up the rear, chanting songs of gladness.

When Waupello reached the shore the procession halted, while Minno invoked the blessing of the sun. Then Waupello, stepping into the beautiful canoe the hands of love had fashioned, turned to the people, and lifting up his clear, sweet voice said:

"Children of Arctides, the day of your trial is over. The future is bright before you. The Bird of Evil is slain, and your captive, who brought you but grief, you have sent her away to her people.

"We go to the land of the Sun, to the country of fruits and of flowers, where the skies are pleasant and smiling, to the land of perpetual summer.

"Farewell to the cold and the snow, farewell to the land of Arctides!"

Then all the people embarking in their canoes, the journey down the Long River was begun.

In the canoe with Waupello was Minno. Pakoble

and Singing Bird. The boy, standing at the prow, looked thoughtfully back upon the canoes following in a long unbroken line, their moving paddles glistening in the sunlight.

And high over the head of Waupello sailed the Bird of Beautiful Plumage, while across the peaked prow of his canoe shone the Word of the Wonderful One.

THE END.

THE BOY, STANDING AT THE PROW, LOOKED THOUGHTFULLY BACK UPON THE CANOES FOLLOWING IN A LONG, UNBROKEN LINE.

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